

K Bible. Old Test. Psalms.

SUNDAY EVENING'S

ENTERTAINMENT:

CONSISTING OF AN

EXPLICATION

OF THE

PSALMS

Which occur in the

EVENING OFFICE

OF THE

CHURCH,

On SUNDAYS and FESTIVALS throughout the Year



LONDON:

Printed by J. P. COCHLAN, Duke-Street, Grosvenor
Square.

MDCCLXXIX.

SUNDAY EVENING
ENTERTAINMENT

CONSISTING OF AN

EXPLANATION

OF THE

P.S.A.L.M.S.



BY
J. P. COLEMAN, D.D.
OF CHURCHILL, OXFORD

ON SUNDAYS AND FESTIVALS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.



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Printed by J. P. COLEMAN, Duke Street, Gloucester
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MDCCLXXIX.

P R E F A C E.

"THE reader may justly alledge
" against the writer of this work,
" (says the pious and learned Bona, in
" the preface to his "Guide to Eternity,")
" that it must be presumption to pre-
" tend to point out to others the way
" to Heaven, himself remaining at the
" same time so obsequiously attached to
" earth." Though humility alone, could
induce a man who "had the elegance
" of a polite writer, the good sense of a
" Philosopher, and the piety of a Saint,"
* to think of obviating such an objec-
tion; yet conviction forces the compiler
of the following sheets, to acknowledge
the strict justice, and propriety of a
similar objection in his own regard. He
is fully sensible of his unfitness to treat
a subject of piety, and of his utter ina-
bility to instil into others, that spirit of
devotion; in which he is himself so de-
ficient. But he must have recourse to
the answer, which the abovemention-
a ed

* Phil. on sacred literature, p. 49. 3d. edit.

ed excellent author makes use of; by citing the well-known lines of an ancient Poet.

*Fungar vice totis, acutum,
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi.*

The compiler moreover, can aver with truth, that in preparing these few sheets, he did not aim, so much to instruct others as to improve himself. The daily recital of a considerable portion of the psalms, being a duty strictly incumbent upon him, it readily occurred to him, that a right understanding and knowledge of what he recited, was necessary, for a due and proper discharge of the engagement he was under: he accordingly set himself to consult and confer with the ablest and most approved commentators, and interpreters of that difficult and recondite part of Scripture, the book of psalms: the satisfaction resulting from these enquiries, amply repaid him for all the labour they cost him: he found himself much benefited by them; the hope of communicating a like benefit to those well-disposed christians, who on Sundays and Holy-days attend at vespers and complin or the appointed evening service of the church, has induced him to offer them

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an exposition of select psalms, of which, that divine service principally consists. Should he fail in this humble attempt of benefiting others, it will be an advantage to himself, at least, in some degree, to have meant well, and to have employed his leisure in a manner suitable to his profession. Add to this, the pleasure which he experienced in the course of his researches; a pleasure encreasing in proportion, as he advanced in them: the remembrance of which, whilst fresh on the mind, causes him to wish, that all his appointed days may be filled up in a like happy employment; and that death, if it shall so please God, may find him engaged in meditations of this kind. It will not be inferred from hence, that the most distant intention is formed, of obtruding on the public, the occasional result of any such future meditations: the compiler frames his wish, with a restrictive view to his own personal satisfaction and improvement. He once, indeed, purposed to prefix to this Essay on the Evening Office, another on the Morning Service of the Church, or the adorable Sacrifice of the Altar. It appeared to him demonstrable with the greatest evidence;

that whoever enters into the whole œconomy of the sacred Writings, with regard to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist; collating faithfully the several passages of both Testaments relative thereto; attending diligently to their true scope of meaning: that whoever is conversant in the history of the Christian Church, and observant of its invariable belief in this point, from the earliest period to this day: that whoever in fine, with a free, liberal, unprejudiced mind, investigates the grounds of this Doctrine, must own, that the belief of Roman Catholics in this mystery, is most rational and solid: and that both the greatest weight of authority, as well as the most cogent strength of argument, co-operate to their conviction, of its being an article of Divine Revelation.

But the Writer would not propose to himself solely by such discussion, to ascertain, or confirm his Readers belief: the nourishment, encrease and perfection of their piety, love and devotion, would be his grand and principal aim. As this plan however would necessarily lead him, to augment considerably the
size

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size of the work, it will not be improper, to defer it, 'till time shall help to shew how far it may be prudently judged acceptable to the Public. This precaution may be the more seasonable, as some Readers may, perhaps, imagine that the present essay, already abounds with needless matter; and that in particular the compiler has been too diffuse in the farrago, which he affects to call notes and illustrations, in reply to whom he frankly owns, he has not studiously avoided all grounds for such an objection, and he flatters himself he should meet with the Reader's indulgence for them, should they contribute in any degree to ward off that irksomeness, and cold indifference, which too often gains ground upon those who set themselves to peruse treatises of mere piety and devotion. To remove still farther all difficulties on this score, it seemed expedient to place the Notes together by themselves, and to refer to them by numerals; that so the Reader's devotion in time of Vespers, or whenever the psalms are used, may meet with no interruption, and he may be left at full liberty to turn to them, or not, as he thinks proper: for the same reason all nicety

of critical disquisition has been shunn'd, and from amongst the variety and disagreement of Interpreters and Expositors, that consistent orthodox version and comment, has been selected, which seemed most likely to conduce to edification and spiritual improvement. Should any persons experience such beneficial effects, from these weak endeavours, the writer would think himself amply rewarded, could he obtain a share in their good prayers; in supplicating which, with all earnestness and humility, he would (from a sense of his own spiritual necessities) exceed, if it may be, even *St. Paul*. "I beseech you therefore, Brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me, in your prayers for me to God." Rom. xv. 30.

OBSERVATIONS on the Divine Office;
and on the excellency and dignity of
the Psalms in general.

PRayer is essential to Religion, as it implies in those who address it to God, a sense of their own wants, and a dependance on his power and goodness alone, for redress. Such a sense and acknowledgement is an inward worship
of

of the Almighty, or Religion itself. Hence Prayer has been the uniform practice of every servant of God, from the Creation of the World, down to our days. For, (as St. *Cyrill* of Alexandria proves,) though Enos was the first 'who began to call upon the name of God' in public assemblies, or the first instituter of public worship; yet Prayer was in familiar use with all his progenitors, even with Adam himself. Noah preserved carefully all the traditions relative to Prayer and Sacrifice, and delivered them to his descendants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The renowned lawgiver of God's chosen people, availed himself of the use of Prayer, as we learn from the memorable instances given in scripture, of its happy influence in disarming the wrath of an offended Deity. This Patriarch's celebrated Canticle, [A] or Thanksgiving for the safe passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, is the most ancient formularity of Prayer extant; and certainly it is not less remarkable for its sublimity and energy, than its antiquity. David derived the special prerogative of "being a man

[A] Note i.

a man according to God's own heart," and a most accomplished prince, from his predilection for Prayer: the fire which, he tells us, was enkindled in his meditation, to this day, gives light and warmth to all who make devout use of his psalms. So long as Solomon continued to tread in the foot-steps of his Father, and to humble himself before God in prayer, his glory and wisdom remained, unrivalled and unimpeached: but no sooner did he remit of his diligence in this holy exercise, than the divine favour and protection seemed to desert him; and he fell insensibly into that abyss of sin and folly, from whence, it is dreadfully problematical, whether he ever emerged. [B] But it is from instances drawn from the New Testament, we are to learn the inseparability of Prayer from religion: Prayer is the groundwork of the Evangelical Dispensation. Jesus Christ, who came into the world to form to himself a people, "adorers in spirit and truth," taught them how to pray by word and example. His immediate Disciples, did not fail to improve under so divine a Master: the pri-

[B] Note ii.

primitive Christians seemed to live only for prayer. No circumstances of time or place * could debar them from it. They were renowned for their faith and their prayer throughout the world. Friends and enemies all conspire in relating the attachment which christians in the early times had to Prayer. Tertullian † makes this an article of his apology for them : Celsus the Pagan turn'd it to a subject of accusation, and Pliny informed the Emperor Trajan, that they were much addicted to it [C] : St. *Basil*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Ambrose* and others, make mention of the number of times, meetings were held in the day for public prayer. Cassian after relating the regulation which the Monks, Egypt and Thebais observed in their Prayers, takes notice, that in all the eastern monasteries, those of Palestine and Mesopotamia, the communities were convened at six stated times each day, to perform that duty. Persons of the most delicate constitutions, did not seek exemptions : [D] It was the practice of many devout women, after having spent great part of

* Quivis locus—ager, solitudo stabulum, carcer, instar Templi ad conventus per agendos fuit. Dyon. Alex. Apud Euseb.

† Tertull. Apolog.

[C] Note III.

[D] Note IV.

of the day in Prayer, to rise at midnight to sing the praises of God *. This usage, no less painful than pious, of consecrating so many hours of the day, and even of giving a considerable part of the night to Prayer, obtained in the church universally for above a thousand years. It was not till the thirteenth century, that any signal abatement of its rigour took place : the great length of the divine office was then found to interfere with the other necessary duties of churchmen, and to preclude a due attention to those pastoral functions, to which many of them were indispensably obliged. Hence it was judged proper to contract it to a form and length more suitable to the exigencies of those who were bound to recite it. The book or whole collection of psalms, lessons, antiphons, collects and other parts of the office, thus modelled and reduced, took the name of Breviary : and this, perhaps, not solely in allusion to the curtailment or abbreviation made, but descriptively, as purporting it to be an abridgement of some of the books of scripture and of the writings of the Fathers.

* Mane hora tertia, sexta nona, vespere, noctis medio, per ordinem psalterium cantabant. Hierom. in Epit. S. Paulæ.

thers ; or a compendium of pious instruction, devout prayer and thanksgiving [E]. Other appellations have, at various times, been affixed to the contents of that book. They are sometimes called divine office, intimating that they are a work of obligation, (*officium est id quod quisque debet efficere*) or debt due to the Almighty. In this acceptation of the word, Cicero entitles the book he wrote on the duties of civil society, the book of offices. And the like title is given by St. *Ambrose* to his treatise on the obligations of a christian. *Gregory* of Tours speaking of the Breviary, calls it the course, as does likewise *Fortunatus* † St. Bennet emphatically styles it *Opus Dei*, and *Agenda*; as being the work of God or divine employment, which calls for the special care and attention of all his ministers and faithful servants. The Greeks applied to the public prayers of the church ; the term canon, a rule or measure ; either because it was regulated by the decrees of different councils, or because it was a certain measure, or por-

[E] Note V.

† *Cursum nudo capite dicebat, et si hyems aut nyx urgeret.*
Fortunat. in vita---S. GERMANI.

tion of praise to be paid to the Almighty at stated times, during the course of each natural day, or within the space of twenty-four hours. Vespers is a name given to that part of divine service or public prayer which took place in the evening, according to the antient division of the said service into canonical hours. They who have wanted leisure or opportunity to attain any others knowledge of the psalms used in vespers, than that which the literal version contained in the vesper-books is calculated to impart, cannot, 'tis presumed, have form'd an advantageous idea of the beauty and excellence of those divine compositions. A spirit of piety enables, I doubt not, many well disposed christians to recite those verbal translations with real profit and devotion [F]: but, I trust, it will not be disputed, that a previous insight into the true meaning and import of those heavenly canticles, would have greatly facilitated and augmented both the one and the other. A favourable idea of the nature, dignity, utility and extent of the subjects of the psalms in general, might probably be ren-

[F] Note VI.

rendered subservient to the same ends. The psalms furnish an inexhaustible variety of the noblest matter, that can engage the attention of a Christian. No part, either of the old or new Testament, supplies a greater, or more important theme. The history of the Creation of the World, recorded in Genesis, together with all the intermediate events, mentioned in all the other books of scripture down to the end of revelation: the wonderful dispensations of God's providence; the achievements of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; the exploits of the judges and kings of Israel. nay, the history of the birth, life passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the formation; propagation, and perpetual duration of his church: the grand final catastrophe, or dissolution of the world, with the subsequent convening of all the sons and daughters of Eve, their sentences of reprobation, or of admission to scenes of endless Joy: all these great topics, are not calculated to affect the reader more exquisitely, nor to afford him more profit and delight, than the subject-matter of the psalms: in fact, those several awful topics are all occasionally

tionally presented to him in the book of psalms, * in a manner the most engaging, and the best adapted to impress the mind with efficacy and advantage; to entertain his imagination usefully; to inform his understanding extensively; to elevate his affections sublimely. The psalms being composed under the immediate influence of the holy Spirit of God, to whom all hearts are open, and by whom all events are foreseen, they are accommodated to every situation of life, and fitted to all circumstances and exigencies, incident to man. "Various writers have attempted, says the pious and erudition Bloisius † to pass a just encomium on the book of psalms, but they have all proved unequal to the task; nor is it in the power of words, to convey an idea adequate to its merit and excellency." The book of psalms, says Euthymius, an antient Monk. § is a compleat Laboratory, wherein a most certain remedy may be found for every disease, wound, and sickness of the soul. The contents of this book (a circumstance which constitutes its singular praise, and is peculiar to this book alone,) are ap-

* Vide Bellarm. præf. in psalm.

† Medulla psalmodiæ.

§ Ibidem in fine

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“plicable to every reader.” Its words are like the Manna that fell from Heaven, suited and grateful to every palate; it affords us, like the garden of Paradise, † every thing that groweth else-where, “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food;” even still blooming, “the tree of life in the middle of the garden;” of which however, the Almighty does not pronounce as heretofore, that whoever shall taste, shall die: But we may consider, the decree as reversed and that whoever tastes, shall live: for “thy words are life eternal.” If the reader be desirous of further testimonies of the excellency of the psalms, I might refer him to *St. Jerom, St. Basil, St. Austin, St. Chrysostom, St. Hilary*, and almost all the holy Fathers; to *Bellarmino, Bossuet, Jansenius, Menochius, Muis, Genebrarde*, and a long catalogue of other expositors; all whose labours shew the esteem they had of this divine book; but I shall cite one other authority the bare mention of which must be thought to supersede and render useless any quotations whatever. Even

† Psalmorum autem volumen, veluti paradisus in quo sunt omnia genera lignorum plantata, &c.

S. ATHAN. ad MARELL:

Even that divine person, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, hath in his own practice and example, given a direct and full approbation of the merit of the psalms. Jesus Christ not only made use of the psalms, but had recourse to them in the most extraordinary circumstances and occurrences of his sacred life. When about to conclude the last important scene, he sung an hymn as *St. Matthew* informs us, c. xxvi. 30. consisting most probably, of the psalms from the 112th. to the 117th. inclusive. When on the cross, and ready to expire, he solaced himself with part of the 21st psalm, "my God, my God why hast thou forsaken me." And at length he breathed out his soul in the words of David's 30th psalm "into thy hands I commend my spirit." what an exalted idea of the psalms does this instance of their use, give birth to? a higher panegyric cannot be raised with human accents: no, nor angelic strains! no wonder then the prayers and praises of the church have been offered up to God, in the language of the psalms in every age, uninterrupted, from the first down to us.

The following Psalms are used on Sundays when
no Feast occurs.

Psalms	109 Dixit Dominus	Page 1
110 Confitebor tibi Domine		7
111 Beatus Vir Qui		12
112 Laudate Pueri Dominum		16
113 In Exitu Israel de Egypto		19

On the Feasts of APOSTLES.

At first Vesp. are used the four first Psalms; instead of the Fifth,

Psalms	116 Laudate Dominum omnes Gentes	page 28
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In the second Vespers are said the

Psalms	109 Dixit Dominus	page 1
112 Laudate pueri Dominum		16
115 Credidi Propter Quod		57
125 In Convertendo Dominus		73
139 Domine Probasti me		105

On the Festival of a Single MARTYR.

At first Vespers the Psalms are as on Sundays, except the last,
which is

Psalms	116 Laudate Dominum omnes	page 28
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In the second Vespers as in the first, only instead of the last,

Psalms	115 Credidi Propter Quod	page 57
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On the Common of MARTYRS.

The Psalms in the first Vespers are the four first, as on the
Sunday, but the last

Psalms	116 Laudate Dominum omnes	page 28
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In the second Vespers the Psalms are as in the first, except the
last, which is

Psalms	115 Credidi propter quod	page 57
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On the Feasts of a CONFESSOR and BISHOP.

In the first Vespers the Psalms are as on the Sundays, except the
last, which is

Psalms	116 Laudate Dominum omnes	page 28
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The second Vespers as the first, except the last which is

Psalms	131 Memento Domine David	page 93
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On the Feasts of a CONFESSOR, not a BISHOP.

The Psalms at the first and second Vespers are the same as in
the first Vespers of Confessors and Bishops.

On the Feasts of the B. V. Mary,
And also on the Feasts of Virgins and of Widows; the Psalms in
the first and second Vespers are

Psalms	109 Dixit Dominus	page 1
112	Laudate pueri Dominum	16
121	Lætatus sum in his	68
126	Nisi Dominus Edificaverit	77
147	Lauda Jerusalem Dominum	82

On the Dedication of a CHURCH.

The Psalms in the first and second Vespers are the same as on
Sundays, except the last which is

Psalms	147 Lauda Jerusalem Dominum	page 82
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On CHRISTMAS DAY,

In the first Vespers as on the Feasts of Confessors not Bishops,
and in the second Vespers

Psalms	109 Dixit Dominus	page 1
110	Confitebor tibi Domine	7
111	Beatus Vir	12
129	De profundis	89
134	Memento Domine David	98

On EASTER and WHITSUNDAYS,

The Psalms are as on Sundays.

Magnificat	page 30
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On the ASCENSION of Our LORD.

The four first Psalms as for Sundays, but instead of the last

Psalms	116 Laudate Dominum omnes	page 28
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On the Feast of CORPUS CHRISTI.

Psalms	109 Dixit Dominus	page 1
110	Confitebor	7
115	Credidi propter	57
127	Beati Omnes qui	86
147	Lauda Jerusalem	82

At COMPLIN.

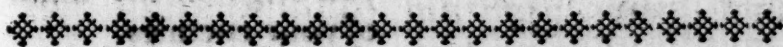
Psalms	4 Cum invocarem	page 34
30	In te Domine	38
90	Qui Habitat	41
133	Ecce nunc Benedicite	49

- Vespers for the DEAD.

Psalms	114 Dilexi Quoniam	page 53
119	Ad Dominum	61
120	Levavi Oculos	64
129	Deprofundis	89
137	Confitebor tibi	100
50	Misereri mei Deus	114

SUNDAY'S

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT.



Dixit Dominus, psalm, 109. The Title, "psalm of David." [G]

ARGUMENT.

THE Royal Prophet throughout this 109th psalm, speaks literally of Jesus Christ, as we may gather clearly from the New Testament, Matt. 22d. where we find our Divine Saviour applying it to Himself: the same may be proved from Acts c. 2. also from 1 Cor. 15, and Heb. 1 and 10. The kingdom of the Son of God, his eternal generation, power, priesthood, and sufferings, are here held forth to view.

Literal Translation.

Liberal Interpretation.

1. **T**HE Lord said to my Lord; sit thou at my right hand.

THE Lord God the Father, has said to his Son, my Lord, sit down on my right hand.

2. Until I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet.

Whilst I lay your enemies prostrate at your feet.

3. The

A

The

[G] Note vii.

3. The Lord will send the rod of thy power out of Sion; rule, thou in the midst of thy enemies.

4. The beginning is with Thee in the day of thy power, in the splendor of saints; I begot thee from the womb before the day-star.

5. The Lord sware, and he shall not repent it: Thou art a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec.

6. The Lord at thy right hand, has broken king's in the day of his wrath.

The Lord will extend your empire from the city of Jerusalem to the extremities of the earth; henceforth shall you reign in the midst of your enemies.

But your power and Majesty shall appear greatest at that day, when environed with bright shining saints; you shall speak the doom of men and angels; thus shall he be honoured whom I have engendered from all eternity.

The Lord has moreover sworn irrevocably, that in you he will unite, as in Melchisedec, priesthood to royalty; that you may offer a perfect sacrifice to him for ever.

The Lord will be always at hand to assist you; and in the day of his wrath he will destroy the king's of the earth who opposed the establishment of your empire.

7. He

He

7. He shall judge in nations ; He shall fill ruins ; He shall crush the heads of many in the land.

8. He shall drink of the torrent in the way ; therefore shall he lift up his head.

He will revenge your cause on rebellious nations ; He will encrease their punishments ; He will humble in the dust all those proud souls who revolt against you.

But let not the Son of the most high expect to be thus a conqueror until he has drunk deep of the torrent of afflictions, surrounding him in this mortal life.

Explanatory COMMENT.

V. 1. The inspired David saw in spirit, that it had been determined in the heavenly Council, that the Son of God should descend upon earth to become incarnate ; and that after his passion and death, his human nature should be exalted to the throne of God, the Father. The enraptured Prophet introduces this determination to the reader, in words to this effect. The Lord God the Father, said to Jesus Christ his Son, Lord of me, and all mankind, sit down in power and dignity equal to myself, on my right hand.

V. 2. " Until I make thy enemies, &c." such was the practice of the Eastern Conquerors to their subdued foes : See Josua c. 10. v. 24. The enemies of Christ and his church will not, all of them be overcome until the end of the world ;

when the number of the elect will be compleated, and all things consummated.

V. 3. In this verse, the Psalmist addresses Jesus Christ. You shall extend your sceptre and power, from Jerusalem, where your kingdom or church first began (Luke 24, 47.) to the utmost boundaries of the earth : proceed then great Conqueror, plant the standard of thy cross, erect and establish thy church, in the midst of Jews and Gentiles ; and rule therein in spite of all thy enemies.

V. 4. With Thee is principality ; or, the source of all power, essentially inherent ; as shall appear more especially at the last day, when surrounded by resplendent myriads of thy faithful servants ; thou shalt judge the world ; thou my eternal Son, begotten of my Divinity before all created beings. The humble psalmist, unwilling, and as it were, unable (says St. Chrisostom on this verse), to utter such stupendous mysteries as the eternity, and consubstantiality of Jesus Christ, puts the declaration of them into the mouth of the eternal Father.

V. 5. " The Lord has sworn." He has set the great seal of Heaven to the important deed, viz. the redemption of mankind, through the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Thou art a Priest after the model of Melchisedec, * effectually incommunicably, eternally ; not as
Aron

* The whole 7th chap. to the Hebrews turns on this subject. See also Gen. c. 14, where Melchisedec offering sacrifice of bread and wine, and distributing it to Abraham's army, &c. is deemed by the holy Fathers, the type of the Eucharistical sacrifice on our altars.

Aron was, figuratively, successively, and transiently.

V. 6, 7. The Lord Jesus Christ, who sits at thy right hand, O God, the Father, has † destroyed the king's of the Earth, (in the day of his wrath) who persecuted, and endeavoured to destroy his church*.

V. 8. But during his so-journment on earth, in the way to his heavenly kingdom, he must drink of the torrent (see ps. 17, and 35, and 124, &c.) of affliction! on these terms shall he be lifted up to power and glory on my right hand. To this purpose St. Paul says. Phil. 2, 8, 9: "He humbled himself---wherefore God hath exalted him."

Before we proceed any further, it may not be improper to remind the reader of what is mentioned in Note ix, and elsewhere, to wit, that, all the psalms are written on a divine preconcerted plan, by which they are calculated for the use and benefit of all who believe in Jesus Christ and his Church in every age of the world, and are adapted to the determinate exigencies of every individual. Every one of us therefore have a personal interest in every psalm we recite, if we belong to Christ, the psalms belong to us, in his divine prescience he foresaw all our temptations, and our falls; our sighs and our repentance; he knew our urging and ceaseless want of his assistance; our deliver-

A 3

ances

† With a prophetic eye, future events are seen with the same clearness and precision as the past.

* Conati sunt reges delere nomen Christianum & non potuerunt. St. Aug.

ances and our grateful acknowledgments of them ; all our wishes, all our hopes, and all our fears. He willed moreover, that these several sentiments and affections, should all be penned down in the psalms, that we might be enabled afterwards, according as occasion suggested, to read therein our own feelings ; thus doubly favouring us, by granting the influence and impresson of his divine grace, and by accommodating us with divine terms and sentences to express the effects of that same influence and inspiration. He who moves us to repentance, and melts us into tears, supplies us with words, well suited to our dispositions. He who gives to our hearts to conceive, gives also to our tongues to utter : he who teaches us to love, shews us, at the same time, how to use the stile of lovers. St. Augustin would have us regard Jesus Christ as the speaker throughout the psalter. We are all united, says he, in Christ, and form one body, as it were, or one personage, of whom Jesus is the head, and the psalms are the voice. Hence even those passages in them, which seem appropriated to the Son of God alone, do in fact, appertain to us also : such is the wonderful condescension of God, continues the Saint, that he deigns to adopt not only the wants and weakness but even the language of mortals, and permits mortal men to use a language peculiar to the Deity. The divine Redeemer speaks in the person and quality of a sinner, and the sinner prays with confidence in the words of his Redeemer. *Vox ipsius etiam nostra est, & vox etiam ipsius est. &c.* August in ps. 62.

Conf.

Confitebor tibi Domine. psalm, 110. Title
Allelujah [H]

ARGUMENT.

THIS psalm contains an act of thanksgiving of the Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity. God is praised herein for his divine perfections, and the miraculous exertion of his power in behalf of his chosen people. This power was a shadow of that which was afterwards to work such wonders in favour of his church. [I]

Translation.

1. **I** Will praise thee,
O Lord, with my
whole heart in the coun-
cil of the just, and in
the congregation.

2. Great are the
works of the Lord:
fought out according
to all his wills.

3. His work is praise
and magnificence: and
his justice continueth
for ever and ever.

4. He hath made a
remembrance of his
won-

Interpretation.

LORD I will praise
thee from the bot-
tom of my heart in the
midst of the assemblies
of the just.

The works of the
Lord are truly noble,
and exquisitely adapted
to his wise designs.

Grandeur appears in
every thing he does;
every work of the Lord
calls for our praise; his
power is infinite, and his
justice endures for ever.

It was this Lord of
mercy and compassion
who

[H] Note viii,

[I] Note ix.

wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious God, he hath given food to them that fear him.

5. He will be mindful for ever of his covenant; He will shew forth to his people the power of his works.

6. That he may give them the inheritance of the Gentiles; the works of his hands are truth and judgement.

7. All his commandments are faithful, confirmed for ever and ever made in truth and equity.

8. He hath sent redemption to his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever.

who miraculously fed our forefathers in the desert; thus rewarding their piety, and giving them a daily memorial of his Almighty power.

Shewing them at the same time that he would be ever mindful of the compact he had made with them.

And that he would display his power in giving them the inheritance of the Gentiles; a power which proves his truth and justice, by the manner of its exertion.

Yes, the word of the Lord is inviolable; what he promised ages ago will come to pass inevitably; he purposes nothing but what is just and remains unchangeable in his purpose.

The Lord has delivered his people from captivity, and made a alliance with them which on his part will never cease.

9. Holy

Let

9. Holy and terrible is his name ; the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Let us beware of dissolving an alliance with a God whose name is so awful and sacred ! rather let us resolve to be wise, remembering, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

10. A good understanding to all that do it ; his praise continueth for ever and ever.

They who suffer themselves to be guided by this fear shew their good sense ; their sound judgement will do them honour for all Eternity.

COMMENT.

V. 1. I will praise thee, O Lord, in the private assembly of the just ; and in the public congregation of the people.

V. 2. 3. 'Tis not in the power of man, tho' a free agent to counteract the unconditional will of the Deity ; and altho' every immoral action does most certainly contradict the will of God, still we must say with the psalmist that all actions, " are sought out according to all his wills." For we must not imagine, says St. Austin, that because we can, at our option, commit sin, we therefore have it in our power to execute our own wills ; and that the will of the Almighty, is not at the same time fulfilled even with respect, to the very sin committed ; for though sin displeases God,
yet

yet the divine pleasure must inevitably take place, in the subsequent punishment or pardon thereof.

“ And his justices continueth for ever and ever.”

V. 4. “ He hath given food.” The food here spoken of has always been considered as an illustrious figure of the Eucharist, or sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. ’Tis acknowledged, the Scriptures declare this sacrament to be more excellent, and more wonderful than the manna. See St. John, c. 6, v. 25, 41, 49, 51, 55. And St. Paul, 1, Cor. 10, Coloss. 2. To lay nothing of the ancient fathers and doctors of the church, who are unanimous evidences of the same truth. [K] now, that the manna was a divine food teeming with miracles, is evident to every reader of Exodus, c. 16. But who among the sectaries of any age or nation, pretended that their cup and communion bread was divine and miraculous, or any thing more than mere bread and wine? See douay bible anno 1609 Gen. 14, Exod. 16, &c. and Bp. Ch...s meditations from Trinity Sunday to the end of the octave of Corpus Christi.

V. 5. 6. The future sense is here used, and denotes obviously an extension of the divine covenant to future times, when “ he will shew forth to his people,” under the new law, “ the power of his works,” in establishing his church upon the ruins of idolatry; and in accomplishing the promises made by the heavenly father to his eternal Son; both here and in psalm 2, 8. “ To thee will I give the Nations for thine inheritance.”

V. 7,

V. 7. 8. Gods "truth" is conspicuous in the performance of his promise to his faithful servant Abraham, by putting the Israelites in possession of Canaan; and his "judgement" adorable in expelling from thence the Amorites who had filled up the measure of their iniquities.

V. 9. 10. Whether we consider the emancipation of the people of Israel from slavery, or the redemption of the world from sin, as both these deliverances were wrought in the name of the Lord, they both justify the emphatic expression of the psalmist, "holy is his name;" and we cannot doubt but that it will prove "terrible," to all those christians who in despite of such awful holiness, continue themselves "unholy." Libertines and free thinkers [L] may be taught from the declaration of the inspired Prophet that however high an opinion they entertain of their own wit and talents, they are still deficient in the very first rudiments of true wisdom; and that though they find themselves applauded by a tribe of sycophants and dependants, or in a circle of companions as vain and perverse as themselves, that nevertheless their glory perishes with the breath of sinners, whilst the understanding of the man who "fears God," shall be held in estimation by approving Angels "for ever and ever."

Beatus,

[L] Note xi.

Beatus, vir. ps. 111. Title, of the return of the
Prophets, Aggeus and Zachary.

ARGUMENT.

THE subject of the preceding psalm is continued in this, as the title seems to indicate; the character of a just man is given, and the happiness of his condition shewn; what is here said of the just man and his temporal prosperity under the old law is, in a spiritual sense, applicable to the happiness of a good and virtuous Christian under the Gospel-dispensation.

Translation.

1. **B**LESSED is the man that feareth the Lord; he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.

2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the righteous shall be blessed.

3. Glory & wealth shall be in his house; and his justice remaineth for ever and ever.

4. To the righteous a light is risen up in dark.

Interpretation.

HAPPY the man who fears the Lord, and who takes delight in obeying his commands.

He will behold his children flourish and encrease; for the blessings of Heaven attend the race of the just.

His family will be famed for riches and honours; but the greatest prosperity will never cause him to forget his duty to his Maker.

Though for a time the just come to be overshadowed

darkness; he is merciful and compassionate and just.

5. Acceptable is the man that sheweth mercy and lendeth; he shall order his words with judgement because he shall not be moved for ever.

6. The just shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not fear the evil hearing.

7. His heart is ready to hope in the Lord; his heart is strengthened he shall not be moved till he look over his enemies.

8. He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor; his justice remaineth for ever and ever;

shadowed by clouds of affliction yet they will shortly enjoy the sunshine of happiness; for an equitable and good God watches over them.

What is more amiable than the righteous man! how tender and compassionate to the poor! how provident and inoffensive is he in his discourse, beloved by God and man; he lives in uninterrupted peace.

His name will live for ever, and the breath of Calumny shall not blast his reputation.

The most threatening dangers do not daunt him; with a calm confidence he waits the hour providence has appointed for him to triumph over his enemies.

He scatters with a liberal hand his riches among the poor, he never deviates from the paths

ever; his horn shall be exalted in glory.

The wicked shall see and be angry; he shall knash with his teeth and shall pine away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.

paths of justice; 'tis thus he attains the height of power and preferment.

The sinner beholding the just man thus exalted shall swell with Anger, shall foam with rage; but vain is his wrath against those whom God prospers.

COMMENT.

The scope of this psalm seems to be a direction to the two prophets Aggeus and Zachary, how they may best proceed in regard of the Israelites, when returned from Babylon; holy David bids them remind the people how great happiness awaits every just man who walks in the fear of God; that by a prospect of attaining their own felicity, they may be encouraged to pursue justice likewise; and thus prevent for the future a repetition of that punishment they had so lately experienced.

V. 1. The fear of God properly so stiled, must ever lead to the observance of God's commandments; otherwise the devils and infernal spirits may be called "blessed" for they, undoubtedly; fear God and tremble.

What is said in the third, and fourth, verse, if applied to every righteous man in particular, or distributively, is not always literally verified; but if it be considered in a prophetic sense 'tis strictly

strictly true. Of the Apostles, who in the language of St. Paul, were the fathers of all the faithful members of the church, it may surely be said, that their "generation was blessed;" "their seed mighty upon earth," and that "glory was in their house. &c."

In the fourth and eighth and other verses is given a description and encomium of the man, who makes a proper use and application of the wealth God has entrusted to his care. *Quis dives salvus?* is a question which cannot be too earnestly recommended to the consideration of every person, charged by providence with the dispensation of riches. Many among such persons, fondly imagine they have an absolute, unrestrained right to all their possessions; and that, to give away alms, is on all occasions, an act of pure generosity or compassion, never to be classed among the deeds of simple and strict justice. From this fatal mistake, arises, too often, a dissipation of the patrimony of the poor, to serve the purposes of parade, pride and luxury. [M] hence also ensue a disregard to the preservation and interest of families, a neglect of children, dependance, and servants; a cruel delay in paying just and lawful debts to the great loss, if not utter ruin of tradesmen; and perhaps to the vexation and oppression of the widow and the orphan; to say nothing of a long list of other baneful consequences of the same error.

B 2

Laudate

[M] Note xii.

Laudate pueri, psalm, 112. Title, Allelujah.

ARGUMENT.

IN this psalm the holy prophet invites all good people to praise God, in consideration of his majesty and glory ; but more particularly for his merciful condescension, in deigning to extend his care and providence to the meanest and lowest of his creatures ; and for being pleased sometimes, to exalt men from the humblest stations, to be the princes and rulers of his people ; a remarkable instance of his good pleasure ; the royal psalmist exhibited in his own person.

Translation.

Interpretation.

1. **P**Raise the Lord ye children, praise ye the name of the Lord,

YE servants of God, praise your God, celebrate his glorious name.

2. Blessed be the name of the Lord, from henceforth now and for ever.

From this moment to the latest eternity, may God's name be praised and blessed.

3. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise.

The name of the Lord deserves the praise of all creatures, from east to west.

4. The Lord is high above all nations, and his

The Lord rules absolute over all nations ; the

his glory above the heavens.

the glory of the heavens is not to be compared with his.

5. Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth.

Who can be liken'd unto the Lord our God, who from his seat of blifs in the highest heavens, deigns to look down upon the least of his works in the firmament, or on the earth.

6. Raifing up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghil.

'Tis he who raifes the poor from the duft, and the needy from the dunghil.

7. That he may place him with princes, with the princes of his people

To place them in the rank of princes, and the rulers of his people.

8. Who maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children.

'Tis he who driefs up the tears of the barren spouse, and makes her the joyful mother of many children.

COMMENT.

V. 1. In the feptuagint the Word *παῖδες* fignifies not only children but fervants; and the fame may be faid of the term. "Pueri" in the vulgate. It does not appear that the pfalmift addreffed himfelf to children or youth, exhorting them to praife the Lord; but we are at liberty to fuppofe that a hint is here given us, of our prayers

and praises being acceptable to God; only in proportion as we approach to the simplicity and innocence of children.

V. 2. The great subject of joy and blessing among the converted Gentiles, was, that Christ whom they began to worship was "so high above all nations," so far exalted above the idols of their country, whom they heretofore adored.

V. 3. When the gospel was spread throughout the world the name of Christ was counted "praiseworthy from east to west." St. Austin, St. Chrysostom and others, expound this verse with a reference to the celebrated Prophecy of Malachy, c. i. 11. "from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, great is my name among the Gentils, and in every place there is sacrificing, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." a long catalogue of venerable names, that is to say, of all the holy fathers and doctors of the church in general [N] might be here adduced to prove that the above prophecy is not, cannot be verified of any other oblation or sacrifice than that which is daily offered up to God, by the priests of the new law in the catholic church: a sacrifice not confined to Palestine alone, as were all the various holocausts of the synagogue, but is the "one pure oblation," made as was foretold "in every place."

V. 4, 5. In the celestial Hierarchy, there is a subordination of rank and degree. If there were not, still, with respect to the Divine Majesty, the most

most exalted among the Host of Heaven, are certainly "low things."

V. 6, 7. The patriarch's Moses, Joseph, and David, &c. were instances of the power and predilection here spoken of. Ought we not to hope, that the same power and mercy will be yet more wonderfully exerted in raising us, "poor, needy mortals from the dunghil of the grave," to place us with the princely inhabitants of his glorious kingdom.

V. 8. This verse was literally verified in the persons of Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, Ann, in the old Testament; and of St. Elizabeth in the new. We may consider these examples, says St. Chrysostom, as figures and types of the church of the Gentiles, who after so many years barrenness became in her old age, "a fruitful parent of children and mother of us all." Galat. iv, 47.

In exitu Israel, psalm, 113. Title, Allelujah.

ARGUMENT.

THE Royal Prophet recounts in this noble hymn [O] the wonders God operated in delivering his people from the land and servitude of Egypt. He proceeds to deride idols, and idolaters, who put their trust in the vain work of men's

[O] Note xiv.

men's hands, rather than in the Almighty Lord, whom Israel adored.

Translation.

Interpretation.

WHEN Israel went out of Egypt; the house of Jacob from a barbarous people.

When the people of Israel quitted Egypt, and the house of Jacob shook off the barbarous yoke which had long enthralled them.

2. Judea was made his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

Then the Lord was pleased, that the Jewish nation should be consecrated to him, and that he alone would reign over Israel.

3. The sea saw and fled; Jordan was turn'd back.

The sea saw this nation upon it's borders and fled from them swiftly; the Jordan saw them upon it's banks, and it shrunk back to it's source.

4. The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of the flock.

The mountains also at the sight of them, skipped like sheep, and the hills like little lambs.

5. What ail'd thee, O thou sea that thou didst flee; and thou O Jordan, that thou wast turn'd back?

O sea why didst thou flee, and thou O Jordan why didst thou so strangely revert thy course?

6. Ye

And

6. Ye mountains that ye skipped like rams, and ye hills like lambs of the flock.

7. At the presence of the Lord the earth was moved; at the presence of the God of Jacob.

8. Who turned the rock into pools of water; and the stony hills into fountains of water.

9. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory.

10. For thy mercy and for thy truth's sake, least the Gentiles should say, where is their God?

11. But our God is in heaven, he has done all things whatsoever he would.

12. The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold,

And ye mountains and hills, what causes the joy ye express in so wonderful a manner.

The Lord, the Lord God of Jacob is with his people, and to his presence these prodigies are owing.

He is the all-powerful God, who changes stones into torrents of water, and turns rocks to fountains.

Continue great God, to exert this thy astonishing power in favour of thy people: not indeed for our sakes, but for the sake of thy glorious name.

And also to stop the mouths of infidels, who, if thou forsakest us, will cry out in scorn, what is become of their God?

Our God is in heaven, ye heathens, whence he moves, rules and directs all things at his pleasure.

But the idols of your nation are nothing more than

gold, the works of the hands of men.

13. They have mouths and speak not : they have eyes and see not.

14. They have ears and hear not ; they have noses and smell not.

15. They have hands and feel not, they have feet and walk not ; neither shall they cry out through their throat.

16. Let them that make them, become like unto them : and all such as trust in them.

17. The house of Israel hath hoped in the Lord ; he is their helper and their protector.

18. The house of Aaron hath hoped in the Lord ; he is their helper and their protector.

19. They

than metal : silver and gold statues manufactured by men.

They have mouths and can't speak, they have eyes and yet can't see.

They have ears and hear nothing ; they have nostrils without the power of smelling.

They have hands and cannot feel ; they have feet but cannot walk : they have a throat but can't cry out.

May they who fabricate such senseless gods, and all who confide in them, may they I say, become like the gods whom they worship.

But as for the house of Israel, they will confide in the Lord, the only true and living God ; and he will protect and assist them.

And the house of Aaron put their trust in the Lord who graciously takes them under his protection.

All

19. They that fear the Lord have hop'd in the Lord; he is their helper and protector.

20. The Lord hath been mindful of us, and hath blessed us.

21. He hath blessed the house of Israel; he hath blessed the house of Aaron.

22. He hath blessed all that fear the Lord; both little and great.

23. May the Lord add blessings upon you: upon you and upon your children.

24. Blessed be you of the Lord; who made heaven and earth.

25. The heaven of heaven is the Lord's; but the earth he has given to the children of men.

All true worshippers of God hope in him, and he guards, succours and preserves them all.

The Lord has vouchsafed to be mindful of us, and to do us many favours.

He has bestowed his blessings on the house of Israel; and he has blessed also the family of Aaron.

He has done the same by all his true and faithful servants without exception.

And O ye servants of God, may he still encrease his blessings to you and to your posterity.

Be ye blessed by God, the Lord of all things; the maker of heaven and earth.

The empyreal heaven was made for God himself; but the earth he has allotted to man thereon to serve and praise him.

26. The

But

26. The dead shall not praise thee O Lord; nor any of them that go down to hell!

27. But we that live bless the Lord; from this time now and for ever.

But O Lord of so many mortals whom you have created, what vast numbers are dead and gone? and all such are incapable of serving you.

We then only who are alive can praise you: let us not lose the precious moments given for that purpose; let us praise the Lord now and henceforwards for ever.

COMMENT.

V. 1. This is the only place of the greek or latin translations of the hebrew scripture, in which the word, "barbarous," occurs, in the original; it signifies a stranger to the Hebrew tongue. The ancient Greeks gave the name of Barbarians to all those who were not of the country of Greece, or who did not speak the Grecian language. [P] thus St. Paul, comprehends all mankind under the names of Greeks and Barbarians. Rom. 1, 14. See also 1. Cor. xiv, 11. The Egyptians may be branded with the epithet "barbarous," for their treatment of the Jews; but they are not to be deemed an ignorant, uncultivated people; descended

descended from Mizraim, the grandson of Noah, they boast a great antiquity, and may be justly supposed to be the inventers of very many of the arts and sciences.

V. 2. About two centuries elapsed between the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt, at the invitation of the patriarch Joseph, and their departure thence under the conduct of Moses. During this period, they had increased their number, from seventy persons, whom Jacob took with him to his son, to upwards of six hundred and three thousand men, capable of bearing arms, besides aged men, women and children. The Almighty wrought many wonders in Egypt, and inflicted amazing chastisements and plagues on the king and kingdom, for detaining the Hebrews in slavery, before that obstinate monarch could be prevailed upon to suffer them to depart. 'Twas not till the overwhelming waters came rolling down upon him, that Pharaoh discover'd the folly and madness of contending with the omnipotence of that God, who had "made Judea his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion."

V. 3. The wondrous passage of the Israelites thro' the river Jordan was effected, forty years after the miraculous journey thro' the Red Sea, took place. [Q] But as they are events of a similar nature, and tend to display the same merciful power, "or to shew that God was with Josue (c. iii. v. 7.) no less than with Moses." The psalmist for this reason, joins them both together.

C
[Q] Note xvi.

V. 4.

V. 4, 5, 6. No mention is made in Exodus of the leaping of mountains and hills ; the prophet therefore, may be understood to allude to the tremors of Mount Sinai, and the neighbouring hills, when the law was promulged ; or, to the motions of the rocks in the streams of Arnon, which were bowed, that the Israelites might rest in Ar, Numb. 21, 15. or perhaps, to the waters accumulated mountains high, in the river Jordan.

V. 7. We may admire the judicious conduct of the divine poet, in concealing the presence of the Deity with the Israelites, until this seventh verse : " For if God had appeared before, there
" could be no wonder, why the mountains
" should leap, and the sea retire ; there-
" fore, that this convulsion of nature should
" be brought in with due surprise, his name is
" not mentioned till now, when with a very
" agreeable turn of thought, God is introduced
" at once in all his majesty." Spectator, No. 461. [R]

V. 8. How obdurate is the heart of man, exclaims St. Chrysostom ; the rocks and stones melt into water, in compliance with the will of God, and finners remain callous to, and insensible of his positive commands ! O Jesus the rock of salvation, from whom flow fountains of water, more admirably than from the rock in the wilderness, dissolve their stony hearts, soften and expand them with the water of divine grace, " unto life everlasting."

V, 9.

[R] Note xvi.

V. 9. The humble psalmist entreats the Almighty, to give the glory of the miracles wrought in favour of the Israelites, not to the Israelites themselves, but to his own sacred name, "acknowledging them to be the mere effects of his mercy," and designed to fulfil the truth of his promises, as well as to prevent his honour being blasphemed by the Gentiles scornful taunts, "where is their God," to help them? If ye cannot discover our God, says St. Austin, in answer to the scoff of the idolaters, nor trace him in his works; forbear to point out to us your own helpless idols, and expose yourselves and them.

The zealous psalmist having told the heathens, that the God of Israel was in Heaven, seated on his glorious throne, high over all the kingdoms of the world, from whence he observes and orders all things here below, "doing whatsoever he pleaseth," enumerates in this and the following verses, by a beautiful induction, the opposite nature and qualities of the true God, compared with their deified blocks and figures. What is here said of the idolatrous nations of old, is with propriety applicable, even to Christians at this day; to such among them at least, as bearing the Christian name, do worship in their hearts worldly idols, by setting their affections on the riches and pleasures of the world, to the exclusion of that sovereign love which God claims from them. All such are to every fatal intent and purpose, in a spiritual sense, as deaf, and dumb, blind, lame, stupid and impotent as the Gentils and the factitious godheads adored by them. For

'tis true of these christians too, that they have " eyes and see not, what belongs to their peace." They have " ears and hear not," the word of God, nor the voice of the charmer instructing to life eternal. They have tongues feet and hands and yet they speak not, things which are of edification and sound doctrine; they walk not in the ways of God's commandments; they work not out " their salvation with fear and trembling."

The prophet next proceeds, to commemorate the hope which the houses of Israel and Aaron, that is, which the Israelitish people in general, and the sacerdotal race of Aaron in particular; and which all, who eminently serve and fear their God, do ever place in him; as also the consequent blessings which they all respectively derive from such their well-fixed trust and confidence. Blessings which they, in vain expect, who, by a secret attachment to any created sublunary object, are interiorly convicted of putting a partial circumscribed faith, and reliance in their Heavenly Creator.

Laudate Dominum omnes Gentes psalm, 116.

Title, Allelujah.

ARGUMENT.

TH E prophet invites all mankind to praise the mercy and fidelity of God, in unitinge
Jews

Jews and Gentils in one body or Society, to wit,
the Church.

Translation.

1. **P**RAISE the
Lord all ye na-
tions praise him all ye
people.

2. For his mercy is
confirmed upon us ;
and the truth of the Lord
remaineth for ever.

Interpretation.

YE nations and
people of the uni-
verse, sing the praise of
the Lord.

Praise his mercy in
the numerous instances
we have of it ; praise
his truth and fidelity in
the accomplishment of
his promises which are
ever sacred and inviol-
able.

C O M M E N T.

The apostle has commented upon this psalm
Rom. c. xv, v. 8. " for I say that Christ Jesus
" was minister of the circumcision for the truth of
" God, to confirm the promises made to the
" fathers ; but the Gentiles are to glorify God,
" for his mercy as it is written," " praise the
" Lord all ye Gentiles ; and magnify him all his
people." From which words of the holy doctor
of the Gentiles we may infer that these latter
(Gentiles) might hope for no other mercy from
God, than that which was purely gratuitous ;
whereas the Jews were in expectation of that
mercy, which God had engaged to shew them,
in virtue of " the promise made to their fathers."

But the infidelity of very many of these Jew
diverted the divine favour from them; whence it
flowed in abundant streams upon all the nations
of the earth.

The Canticle Magnificat. Luke. i, 46.

ARGUMENT.

“ **M**ARY rising up in those Days went into
“ the hill-country with haste into a city
“ of Juda; and she entered into the house of
“ Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth; and it came
“ to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the saluta-
“ tion of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb,
“ and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost,
“ and she cried out with a loud voice and said,
“ blessed art thou among women, and blessed is
“ the fruit of thy womb; and whence is this to
“ me that the mother of my Lord should come
“ to me &c.” Luke. i. c. xxxix. v. 42. upon
this occasion, the Virgin-mother of God, in
reply to her cousin Elizabeth, uttered the follow-
ing divine canticle.

Translation.

Interpretation.

1. **M**Y soul doth magnify the Lord. **M**Y soul glorifies the Lord.

2. And

And

2. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

And is transported with joy at the thoughts of the goodness of my God.

3. Because he hath regarded the humility of his hand-maid ; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he has deign'd to look down on me his lowly servant ; for which all ages to come shall pronounce me blessed.

4. For he that is mighty, hath done great things to me ; and holy is his name.

The Almighty whose name is most sacred, whose mercies are infinite,

5. And his mercy is from generation to generation, to them that fear him.

Extending from generation to generation, over all who fear him ; this Almighty has work'd wonders in my behalf.

6. He hath shewed might in his arm ; he hath scattered the proud in the concit of their heart.

'Tis thus he dispays his power when 'ere he pleases ; and baffles the schemes of the proud.

7. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

He deposes the great and powerful of the earth, to exalt the little and humble.

8. He hath fill'd the hungry with good things ;
and

He seeds and enriches the poor and indigent ;

and the rich he hath sent away empty.

9. He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy.

10. As he spoke to our father's, to Abraham and his seed for ever.

digent; and with-holds his blessings from the rich.

He is mindful of his mercy; and in order to fulfil the promise made to our forefathers, Abraham and his descendants.

He will graciously prosper his people of Israel.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1. The humble Virgin, does not refuse to acknowledge the glorious qualities attributed to her by St. Elizabeth; but so far from interpreting them to her own honour, she takes occasion from her unimportance to "magnify the glory of God."

V. 2. With all the powers of her soul "she rejoiced in God," for deigning to be born of her, and to become her son and "saviour."

V. 3. In the opinion of the holy fathers, Mary owes the dignity of her divine maternity more to her humility, than to any or all her other virtues. The honour and devotion which the catholic church has paid, and will continue to pay her, in all ages, is here definitely predicted.

V. 4. Mary does not say this honour shall be given her, in consideration of her own excellence, but

but, "because the mighty," has bestowed upon her gifts surpassing all human power, which part of the prophecy would not be fulfilled, if the church, in honouring the Blessed Virgin, designed any thing more than to do honour to God's blessings in her.

V. 5. God shews mercy to the most rebellious and daring sinners, favouring them with many gracious calls and inspirations; but the great mercy of salvation, he will bestow upon none but those who truly love and "fear him."

V. 6. Sennacherib and one hundred, eighty-five thousand Assyrians destroyed in one night at the prayer of Ezechias; Holofernes slain by the hand of a woman. Antiochus confounded, blasted, and eaten alive by worms; are some of the many instances in which God "hath scattered the proud in their conceit" &c.

V. 7. Saul deposed and David raised to the throne verify this verse.

V. 8. "Blessed are they who hunger after justice, they shall be filled." But the rich (in their fancied justice) he hath sent away empty.

V. 9. 10. When God freed the Israelites from Pharaoh's bondage, he then "received Israel," a greater favour and protection he shewed them by being born among them, of the house of David. God will again "receive Israel," into favour and into his church towards the end of the world; all this in virtue of promises "made to Abraham and his seed for ever."

Cum

Cum Invocarem, psalm, 4. Title, Psalm of David. To the end. [S]

ARGUMENT.

IN the opinion of several interpreters, David composed this psalm upon occasion of his narrow escape from the hands of Saul, whose whole army had surrounded him. The pious christian will find comfort in a devout recital of the same, after eschewing the snares of his enemy the devil; by overcoming temptation.

Translation.

1. **W**HEN I invoked, the God of my justice heard me; in tribulation thou hast enlarged me.

2. Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

3. Sons of men how long are ye of heavy heart? why do ye love vanity and seek a lie?

4. And

Interpretation.

O GOD the author and preserver of my innocence; you have graciously heard me calling upon you in my distress: you have set me at large when my enemies encompassed me on all sides.

Deign O Lord, to be always thus merciful to me in the hour of trouble and danger.

But you, O sons of men who persecute me; how long will you be blinded by passion! how

4. And know that the Lord has made his holy one marvellous : the Lord will hear me when I shall cry to him.

5. Be ye angry and sin not ; what ye say in your hearts, be ye sorry for in your chambers.

6. Offer ye the sacrifice of justice, and hope in the Lord : many say who shews us good things ?

7. The

how long will you delight in forming vain projects against me and in deceiving yourselves.

Acknowledge the all-powerful hand of God in my wonderful deliverance from your snares be assured the same God will always hear the prayer of his anointed whenever I shall cry unto him.

Turn your anger against yourselves that it may cease to be sinful ; let the dead silence of the night induce you to compunction : be sorry for the hatred you have cherished in your hearts against me.

Offer to God the sacrifice of a pure and holy life, and put your trust in him. They who accompany me in my troubles cry out with an air of desponcy, when shall we see the prosperity we have been so often flattered with.

As

7. The light of thy face is signed upon us, O Lord : thou hast given joy to my heart.

8. By the fruit of their corn, and wine and oil, they are multiplied.

9. In peace I will both sleep and rest.

10. For thou, O Lord, hast singularly established me in hope.

As for me convinc'd, O Lord, by manifold experience, that you ever regard me with a favourable eye ; I feel a secret joy in the midst of my sufferings.

Hence I behold without concern the number of my enemies increased, and elated with the abundance of their riches and enjoyments.

And under your protection I shall at all times and in all places repose in peace.

For your goodness has so confirmed and settled my hope in you, that no trials nor dangers can ever shake it.

COMMENT.

V. 1. St. Chrysostom remarks, that the power and goodness of God are more comfortably exerted in our behalf, when he "enlarges" our hearts, i. e. when he encourages and supports us in our sufferings, than when he removes entirely "tribulation" from us.

V. 2. The Psalmist has just told us, that the Almighty had taken pity on him and heard his prayer :

prayer: yet here again he sues for mercy, and begs of God to listen to him! so true it is that we stand incessantly in need of the divine assistance, and therefore we ought unweariedly to re-iterate our petitions in order to obtain it.

V. 3. There are some expositors who think that the argument of this psalm is the same as that of the preceding or third psalm; which is confessedly the flight of David from the pursuit of his son Absalom: and in this third verse, they say an expostulation is made by the holy monarch with his pursuers, for despising the royal majesty and power with which God himself had invested him.

V. 4. Acknowledge the omnipotent hand that places me on the throne of Israel, and no longer "love vanity and falsehood," by vainly endeavouring to wrest the kingdom from me. If the Psalmist be supposed to address Saul and his army, the mode and strength of his reasoning will be equally opposite and conclusive.

V. 5. The advice which holy David here gives to his enemies, is directed to us also: and the same is recommended and in part repeated by St. Paul to the Ephesians, c. iv. v. 26.

V. 6, 7. Offer the acceptable sacrifice of good works to God, and be ever just; then may ye safely confide in him; if ye ask me what advantage shall we reap from being just? let the blessings which God showers down upon all those who strive to be righteous; let the favourable regard with which he has vouchsafed to distinguish even me, be your answer.

D

V. 8.

V. 8, 9, 10. Let my enemies console themselves with their riches, and boast of their full granaries and cellars : I fear them not ; I will sleep peaceably in the midst of them ; for I trust in thee, O God, and thou hast given me special reason to hope for safety.

In te Domine Speravi, psalm, 30. Title, in an Extasy. * Psalm of David.

ARGUMENT.

THE Royal Prophet in the height of danger and distress, caused by the revolt of Absalon and his adherents, flees to God for succour and protection ; testifies the success of his prayer, and invites all good people to imitate his example by having recourse to the divine assistance in their every peril and affliction, temporal or spiritual. This psalm consists of six verses.

Translation.

Interpretation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. IN thee O Lord I have hoped ; let me not be confounded for ever : in thy justice deliver me,</p> | <p>I Have ever placed my hopes in thee, O Lord ; may it never be said that I hoped in vain ; but may thy justice induce thee to deliver</p> |
| <p>2. In-</p> | <p>liver</p> |

* This part of the title is no where found prefix'd to the Hebrew text : neither is it met with in all the Greek copies : it seems to have been taken from the 23d verse of the psalm, wherein King David expresses his consternation on the first intelligence of a dangerous insurrection ; which event gave rise to the whole pathetic composition.

2. Incline thine ear to me, make haste to deliver me.

3. Be thou to me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge, that thou may'st save me.

4. For thou art my strength and my refuge ; and for thy name thou wilt conduct me and nourish me.

5. Thou wilt bring me out of this snare which they have hid for me, because thou art my protector.

6. Into thy hands I commend my spirit, thou hast redeem'd me O Lord God of Truth.

liver me from the snares of my enemies.

Dangers press upon me ! listen to my cries ! haste Lord ! Oh help me !

To thee I flee as to a place of refuge and security : be to me, O God, a guardian and protector.

Thou art my strength my only stay, for thy name and honour's sake thou wilt free me from the dangers that encompass me. Thou wilt provide against all my wants and necessities.

As thou hast taken me under thy immediate protection, I doubt not of escaping from the toils which the enemy has laid for me.

Deliver'd thro' thy assistance from numberless perils, I cannot suspect thy fidelity : to thee therefore I entrust myself with all the confidence of security.

COMMENT.

V. 1, 2. I shall not have cause to be confuted, or blush as if deceived and disappointed ; for your justice requires the guilty should be punished, and the innocent set at liberty.

V. 3. The Hebrew text in this place, addresses God metaphorically, as a strong rock and house. Menoc.

V. 4. " My strength," the allusion to the rock and fortification is here continued, " my food." The royal Fugitive's life was in danger, not only from the outward violence of his enemies, but even from famine.

V. 5, 6. " With thee I deposit or entrust my life." Holy David sensible, that nothing less than divine power could rescue him from the extremity of danger and distress to which he was reduced, commits himself and his affairs to God, whose seasonable interposition he had experienced in various critical conjectures. The former part of this verse was adapted by Jesus Christ, in his expiring moments. Luke xxiii. 46. from which divine example it came to be of celebrated use in the church, who recommends it to all her members as a proper prayer to express their confidence in the Lord, during the pressure of any evil whatever ; but more especially, to mark their hopes of salvation in the agonizing peril of death.

Qui habitat in adjutorio, ps. 90. Title, The
praise of a Canticle. [T]

ARGUMENT.

SOME Commentator's contend, that this psalm was indited by Moses; but it seems more generally acknowledged to have been written by King David, on occasion of some pressing danger, or severe calamity; perhaps, that of the plague, 1 Pral. 21. which swept away in a short space of time, seventy thousand persons in the course of the psalm. Three distinct personages are introduced, viz. the Almighty, the Psalmist, and the Just Man. Their dialogue is sublime and instructive in the highest degree; it furnished St. Bernard with matter for a work of considerable length.

Translation.

1. **H**E that dwells in the help of the highest; shall abide in the protection of the God of heaven.

2. He shall say to the Lord; thou art my protector and my refuge; my God, I will hope in him.

3. For

Interpretation.

Whoever confiding in the goodness of God, flees to him for protection, shall find in him a sure defence from all evil.

You are my refuge; you are my guardian, shall he say to the Lord; I'll place all my confidence in you.

D 3

For

[T] Note xix.

3. For he has delivered me from the snare of the hunters, and from the sharp word.

4. With his shoulders he shall overshadow thee; and under his wings thou shalt hope.

5. His truth shall encompass thee with a shield; thou shalt not be afraid of mighty fear.

6. Of the arrow flying by day, of mischief rambling in darkness, of invasion and the noon-day demon.

7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right-hand; but to thee it shall not approach.

8. But thou shalt consider with thy eyes; and

For it is you my God, who will snatch me from the snares of my enemies, and frustrate their spleen against me.

Yes, that God of tenderness and love, will take you as it were under his wings, and screen you from all misfortunes.

His fidelity to his promises, shall be to you as a shield of defence; you shall not be alarm'd in time of nocturnal darkness.

Neither shall you fear the strokes aim'd at you in broad-day; nor the secret artifices employed for your destruction, nor even the open attacks of the devil himself.

You shall behold thousands fall on your left-hand, and tens of thousands on your right; but you shall remain unhurt and undisturb'd.

And you shall see ample vengeance taken on

and shalt see the reward of sinners.

9. For thou, O Lord, art my hope; thou hast made the highest thy refuge.

10. No evil shall come to thee, and the scourge shall not approach to thy tabernacle.

11. For he has given his angels charge of thee, that they may keep thee in all thy ways.

12. They shall bear thee in their hands; least perhaps, thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13. Thou shalt walk on the asp and basilisk; and thou shalt tread on the lion and dragon.

14. Because he has hoped

on all who have persecuted you unjustly.

By appealing to God and declaring to him, "thou art my only hope," you have secured to yourself his most powerful protection.

By means of this protection, you are safe from every untoward accident of life; and from every hostile attempt whatever.

For know that the Lord has committed you to the care of his angels, with a charge to accompany and to defend you on all occasions, and in all places.

In every occurrence of difficulty and danger, they'll assist you; they'll secure you in their arms.

They will enable you to tread unhurt on the asp and basilisk; and to trample without fear the lion and dragon.

Because the just man says

hoped in me, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he has known my name.

15. He shall cry to me and I will hear him; I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him and glorify him.

16. I will fill him with length of days; and shew him my salvation.

says, the Lord has hoped in me, I will be his deliverer: I will protect him because he has called upon me, and done honour to my name.

He has invoked my assistance, and I will grant it; I will be with him in time of tribulation, and rescue him gloriously from it.

I will reward him with many happy years; and conduct him safe to the end of them.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1. "To dwell in the help of the highest," precludes all presumption, despair, and every other vice. The Christian therefore says, *St. Bernard*, who remains addicted to any vice, but more particularly if he be actually guilty of presumption or despair, has nothing to expect from the "protection of the God of Heaven."

V. 2, 3. This language becomes them only, continues the same Saint, who with holy David, have no greater wish, than to obtain the protection of the Lord, and fear nothing more than to be deprived of it. "Snares of the hunter," is a metaphor importing clandestine attacks of the enemy. "Sharp word" may be understood of his insults and open assaults; in the Hebrew phrase, "sharp

“sharp word,” frequently denotes, “sharp thing,” or any sensible misfortune.

V. 4. Here the Psalmist apostrophises the person that has been speaking, and by a beautiful similitude encourages him to trust in God: Yes, “the Lord will overshadow you;” under the care of an all-wise, and all-powerful providence, you may repose in security and comfort; even as birds shelter their young under their wings, he will guard you, &c.

V. 5, 6. The “truth” of God’s words, whereby he promises to be the just man’s defence, is what, “encompasses him as a shield.” The Chaldaic paraphrase, explains the ensuing words of the evil angels, who range by night causing fear; and of the arrow of the angel of death, which flies by day; and of death itself which is “mischief rambling in darkness;” and lastly, of the “invasion of devils” called “noon-day,” as being supposed to cause a noisome pestilence in the south, *Buise, Muis.* But several judicious critics, well versed in the original Hebrew give no other explanation of the “mischief in the dark,” of the “noon-day devil,” &c. Than that the just man under the protection of heaven has nothing to fear by day or by night, from the various dangers, terrors, adverse accidents, afflictions, &c. to which human life is continually exposed.

V. 7. If we allow this psalm to have been composed on occasion of the pestilence mentioned in the argument, then the meaning of this verse is obvious. We do not read, that holy David or his family suffered by the contagion; though “thousands

lands and ten thousands," fell round about him; yet "to him it did not approach." It has pleased God frequently to manifest a like singular Providence in favour of his beloved and faithful servants; a remarkable instance of which was exhibited in the year 1720. At Marseilles in the person of the pious Bishop of that city. This holy and zealous prelate, during a great plague which ravaged his diocese and carried off thousands of his flock, assisted the sick night and day, with the utmost assiduity and tenderness, and persisted in the exercise of his charitable functions, undaunted and unhurt, all the time of the mortality; [U] a similar zeal and providential safety was observed in a priest, more than four-score years old, member of a late society; who attended the afflicted inhabitants on the same melancholy occasion.

V. 8. The just man is here still addressed, and assured that he "shall see the reward of sinners," that is, the judgements of God upon impenitent and incorrigible transgressors, "with his eyes, he shall consider," their destruction, not as a matter of joy but as a subject of gratitude to God for not being, himself, involved in their misery.

V. 9. Here seems to be a repetition of the sentiment contained in the second verse of the psalm; divine protection is promised to the just man, because he prays for it; thou art my hope; and because he confides in the 'refuge of the most high.'

V. 10. In the particular instance, which the psalmist had in view when he wrote this verse, it may

[U] Note xx.

may have been literally verified ; but we cannot imagine it to be universally true, and to hold in all cases ; when applied to David, we know for certain, that " evil came to him," both spiritual and temporal ; since he both sinned grievously, and endured grievous punishments ; were we indeed so happy, as to put our trust truly and solely in God, and to forego every refuge, except that of the " most High ;" then, undoubtedly, the greatest of all evils, and dreadfulest of all scourges, to wit, sin ; could not " come to us." But who among the sons and daughters of Adam, does thus uniformly and efficaciously " hope in the Lord."

V. 11. 12. Here again, a restriction is necessary ; wonderful, no doubt, is the privilege granted to mortals, of having Angels for their guardians ; and singular is the care and tenderness of those condescending spirits over their respective wards ; but we are not hence to fancy, that we are at liberty to throw ourselves rashly and foolishly into danger, in confidence of their help and protection ; when duty calls, dangers may be braved ; but wantonly to court them is to " tempt the Lord God ;" and to imitate the devil, suggested to Jesus Christ, that he might safely " cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple," upon the presumption of what is written concerning him, in the 12th, verse of this psalm.

V. 13. Many servants of God, both under the old and new testament, have been endued with absolute command over the fiercest brutes, and most venomous serpents. 1. King. xvii. 34. The prophet recounts of himself, that in his youth-
ful

ful Days, he seized bears and lions by the jaws and slew them with ease; and our dear Saviour tells his Disciples, Luke. x, 19. "I give you power to tread upon scorpions and serpents." But asp, basilisk, lion &c. are names ascribed in holy writ, to the devil, as fit emblems of his strength, fury and craft, and other natural qualities. Him therefore, by God's grace, we are ever enabled to "walk upon," and to "trample under foot," "may the God of peace crush satan under your feet." Rom. xvi, 20.

V. 14. 15. The Almighty himself is here evidently introduced as speaker; his divine words are a confirmation of what the prophet has before assured us of. "Because he hath hoped in me I will deliver him," where is the man, asks Tertullian, who does not say he hopes in God? yet how few men, have a share in the sweet and comfortable tidings here announced! and why? because the hope here spoken of, is that arduous hope of which St. Paul speaks; Rom. v. "tribulation worketh patience and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not, &c."

V. 16. "Length of days" means eternal glory according to St. Bernard, a long life in this world is not deemed a felicity, by those who sigh daily after "salvation," in the next. How amazing and fearful, a consideration is it, says the devout *Bellarmino*, that Christians who are candidates for eternity, should waste their days in temporary pursuits, either foreign to, or destructive of those expectations of inconceivable bliss, to which, as

adoptive heirs of Heaven, they are entitled.
 " May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
 " Father of glory, give unto us the spirit of
 " wisdom; that we may know what is the hope
 " of his calling, and what are the riches of
 " the glory of his inheritance, &c." 1. Eph.
 xvii. 18.

Ecce nunc Benedicite, ps. 133. Title, Gradual
 Canticle: [X]

ARGUMENT

THIS is the last of the gradual hymns composed, 'tis thought in order to be sung at the conclusion, or compleat finishing of Solomon's magnificent temple. The priests are here reminded of the motives they had to bless God, and render him acceptable service. When the house of God was built, it's decorations compleated, the prayers and sacrifices regulated and they themselves set free from every annoyance and interruption of their enemies.

Translation.

1. **B**Ehold now bless
 the Lord, all ye
 servants of the Lord.

2. Who stand in the
 house of the Lord; in
 the

Interpretation.

YE ministers of the
 Lord God, and
 constant attendants in
 his house.

Ye who dwell in the
 temple of the Lord;
 E delay

the courts of the house
of our God.

3. In the night's lift
up your hands towards
the holy places, and
bless the Lord.

4. Our Lord bless
thee from Sion, who
made heaven and earth.

delay not to bless and
praise him with all fer-
vour.

By night and by day,
stretch forth your hands
towards the sanctuary,
and praise the Lord.

Make incessant vows
to God in behalf of his
people, and say; may
the Almighty Lord,
who made heaven and
earth, pour down his
grace and benediction
upon thee, O Israel,
from out of Sion the
place of his abode.

COMMENT.

V. 1, 2, 3. The prophet may be supposed to
address the priests of the temple, in the Words,
“ who stand in the house of the Lord,” and the
Levites in the subsequent words, “ in the courts
of the house,” for there were different apartments
or separations in the temple, which were occupied
or approached to the ministers according to their
respective Ranks and dignities. [Y] “ In the
nights.” The levitical singers abode in their
chambers that they might day and night con-
tinually serve in their ministry,” 1. Paral. ix, 33.
This was done in imitation, it may be, of the
heavenly

[Y] Note xxii.

heavenly spirits of whom St. John recounts, "they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple." Revel. vii, 15. The advice of the psalmist is literally practised in the catholic church, by many of her religious communities of both sexes, who, after the example of the ancient Levites and in union with the blessed spirits pointed out by the elders in the apocalypse, "serve God day and night in his temple."

V. 4. This verse may be interpreted to be the prayer, which the servants of God (to whom the foregoing three verses are addressed) make in behalf of the people at large.

Nunc Dimittis. Song of Simeon. Luke ii. 29.

ARGUMENT.

" **B**EHOLD there was a man in Jerusalem
 " named Simeon; and this man was just
 " and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel;
 " and the Holy Ghost was in him. And
 " he had received an answer from the Holy
 " Ghost, that he should not see death before he
 " had seen the Christ of the Lord: And he came
 " by the Spirit into the Temple; and when his
 " parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for
 " him according to the custom of the law; he
 " he also took him into his arms and blessed
 " God, and said," the following verses.

Translation.

Interpretation.

1. **N**OW thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace.

NOW welcome the accomplishment of thy promise, O Lord; now take me to thyself; I shall die in peace.

2. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation.

For my eyes have been blessed with the sight of the Saviour of the world; thy Divine Son.

3. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people :

Him thou hast destined by an eternal decree, to be acknowledged by all people ;

4. A light to the Revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

As a light for the Conversion of the Gentiles ; which light to the great glory of thy favoured Israelites, arose from among them.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1, 2. If they who only touched the " Hem of the Garment," of Jesus Christ, felt sensibly the influence of his Divine Grace, what a communication of it must he have had, who held Christ in his arms, and tenderly embraced him ; the effect of this communication was visible in the

im.

immediately subsequent conduct of the venerable Simeon ; by this heavenly intercourse and familiarity, his affections were disengaged from this world and fixed on Heaven ; he wished for nothing thence-forwards, but to die peaceably in the Lord. *St. Cyprian.*

V. 3, 4. Among other blessings, which holy Simeon received from the sight of the Infant Jesus, is to be numbered the gift of Prophecy. He was enabled instantly to foretel the call and conversion of the Gentiles to the Christian Faith ; a secret which the Apostle *St. Peter* could not discover, all the time Jesus lived upon earth ; 'twas not 'till he had been taught all truth, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and had moreover received the aid of a wonderful vision, that he learned this mystery. *Acts x. 11.* The great moral to be drawn from this Canticle is. that which is insisted upon by *St. Paul* in his Epistle to Titus, c. ii. v. 13. viz. That “ we should look for the blessed hope in the second coming of the great God of Glory, and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” with a joy and eager expectation, proportioned to that which holy Simeon and the ancient Patriarch's expressed for the first coming of Christ in the flesh.

Dilexi quoniam, psalm. 114. Title, Allelujah.

ARGUMENT.

THE Royal Psalmist returns thanks to God in this psalm, for having delivered him from
 E 3 the

the imminent danger, into which the revolt of his son Absalom had thrown him. The holy Father's interpret it in a mystical sense, of a Christian expressing his gratitude to God, for deliverance from trouble, spiritual or temporal, or both.

Translation.

I Have lov'd because
the Lord will hear
the voice of my prayer.

For he has inclin'd
his ear to me : and in
my days I will invoke
him.

The sorrows of death
have surrounded me :
the dangers of hell have
sought me.

I have found affliction
and sorrow ; and I
have invoked the name
of the Lord.

O Lord deliver my
soul : the lord is merciful
and just, and our
God is compassionate.

Interpretation.

I Love the Lord God,
who has heard my
prayers :

He has listen'd to my
cries, I will praise him
all the days of my life.

I was plung'd in an
abyss of grief, and I saw
my life in imminent danger
on all sides.

Sorrow and affliction
was my portion ; I
seem'd to have no resource :
and I call'd upon the name of the
Lord.

O my God, I cried,
deliver me from the
dangers which surround
me : The Lord is merciful,
he is just, our
God is good, he has
compassion on the miserable.

The

The

The Lord keeps little ones: I was humbled, and he has deliver'd me.

Turn O my soul into thy rest; for the Lord has done good to thee.

For he has deliver'd my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from slipping.

I will please the Lord in the land of the living.

The Lord protects the humble; he beheld me in the height of distress, and he freed me from it.

Enjoy then O my soul, the respite and repose which the Lord has obtain'd for you; taste the sweet fruits of his bounty.

He has drawn me from the jaws of death; has dried up my tears; and with-held me from the precipice into which I was just falling.

Ever mindful of these blessings, my chief and only care all the days of my life, shall be to render myself pleasing to the Lord.

COMMENT.

V. 1. "I have loved because." The soul of the psalmist, transported with love and gratitude, seems at first, to express her affection without declaring her object, as thinking, says *St. Basil*, that all the world must know that the person meant, is God, the sovereign good, who alone is sovereignly amiable. Thus the pious Magdalen

in,

in her conversation at the sepulchre, with one whom she supposed to be a gardener, exclaims, (though no previous mention had been made of Jesus) "Lord if thou hast taken him." John xx, 15. * Thus again King David having learnt by divine revelation, that the ark should be finally settled on Mount-Sion, the spot God had chosen for his only Temple to stand on, bursts forth into that beautifully abrupt beginning of the 86th, psalm. † *Fundamenta Ejus*, its foundations on Mount-Sion.

V. 3. 4. The Prophet alludes, probably to some most imminent danger of Death, from which he was rescued during the rebellion of Absalon, and his desperate adherents; a due sense of our salvation from sin and death eternal, through the sufferings and blood of Christ, would cause us to adopt the animated expressions of this psalm, with proper feeling and gratitude.

In a literal sense. David speaks of that repose and security which he enjoyed "by the bountiful dealing of God." when the conspiracy of his Son and his other subjects was quashed. SS^s. *Basil*, *Chrysostom* and *Austin*, explain what is here said of the peace of conscience "joy in the Holy Ghost," which a true penitent experience as a pledge of pardon, and a kind of foretaste of that rest and felicity which he hopes to attain to in Heaven.

* Vis amoris hoc agere solet in Animo,
Ut quem ipse semper cogitat; nullum
Alium ignorare credat.

St. Greg. Pa.

† Multa de amore & desiderio---volvens secum, tamquam
plura intus apud se meditatus erumpit in hoc.

Fundamenta Ejus, St. Augst.

Heaven. And they further observe, that the sentiments and resolution of such a penitent, whose "Soul has been delivered from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling," should be invariably such, as that which is here expressed. "I will please the Lord in the land of the living:" But who "demands St. *Austin*", can please and serve duly the living God, whilst he abides in this land of peril and snares; in this body of sin and death! * None but they who can aver with St. *Paul* "we labour to please God," ever mindful that "we must all appear before the Judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done whether it be good or evil." 2. Cor. v, 9. 10.

Credidipropter quod. psalm. 115. Title, Allelujah.

ARGUMENT.

THIS psalm in the original Hebrew, is a continuation of the foregoing 114th, and consequently the subject of it is here continued. The Septuagint and Vulgate begin here a fresh psalm [Z] the argument of which according to St. *John Chrysostom* relates to the Jewish Captivity in Babylon; other Interpreters refer it to the persecution which Saul carried on against holy David; others, in fine, say it regards the time

* Quis autem placet Deo vivo,
In Corpore mortuo? St. *August.*

[Z] Note xxiii.

time of transferring the ark to Jérusalem, when God as the scriptures mention, 2. Kings, vii, 1. "gave the King rest on every side from his Enemies. 'Tis a question of no consequence, which of these opinions is preferable; as the psalm may be rendered equally improving and edifying which ever be adopted.

Translation.

Interpretation.

1. **I** Believed, for which cause I spoke: but I was humbled exceedingly.

I Have hoped in the Lord, I rais'd my voice to implore his succour, for I was reduc'd to the utmost misery.

2. I said in my excess; every man is a liar.

Yes, said I, when trying to escape from my enemies, all men are false; no man's fidelity is proof against adversity.

3. What shall I return to the Lord, for all that he has given to me?

What return can I make to my good God, for all the blessings he has heap'd upon me?

4. I will take the chalice of salvation; and I will call on the name of the Lord.

I will offer him a sacrifice of thanksgiving, for my happy escape and render due praise to his holy name.

5. I will render my vows to the Lord before all his people: pre-

I will pay my vows to him in presence of all his people; I will proclaim

precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.

claim before them, that God's faithful servants are dear to him ; and he will not suffer them to fall victims to the malice of their enemies.

6. O Lord, because I am thy servant : I am thy servant, and the son of thy hand-maid.

Because O Lord, I attend diligently to your service, and am born of a mother who always served you faithfully.

7. Thou hast broken my bonds : I will offer to thee a sacrifice of praise, and I will call on the name of the Lord.

Upon this account you have delivered me out of the hands my of enemies : I in gratitude will offer to you a sacrifice of praise, and loudly celebrate your name.

8. I will render my vows to the Lord in the sight of all his people ; in the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

Thou Jerusalem shalt receive me victorious within thy walls ; and I will pay my vows to the Lord before his tabernacle, and in presence of all his people.

COMMENT psalm, 115.

V. 1, 2. In recompense of the Prophet's excessive humiliation, God favour'd him with a supernatural vision, by means of which he discovered intuitively the Vanity of all human Beings, and pronounced in his trance or extasy (*in extasi* in excessu.) That " all men are liars."

liars." The Hebrew text imports "haste, or trepidation;" I said in my haste," occasioned by fear and amazement "all men are liars." There is no credit to be given to their promises of delivering or assisting me.

V. 4. "I will take the Cup of salvation," is a phrase taken from the common practise of the Jews in their thanksgivings; in which a feast was made of the remainder of their sacrifice; and the offerers together with the priests, did eat and drink before the Lord; and among other rites, the master of the feast took a cup of wine in his hands, and solemnly blessed God for it, and for the mercies which gave occasion to the thanksgiving; and then gave it to all the guests, of which every one drank in his turn.

V. 5. The grateful King, not content with the private personal acknowledgement, which in the fulness of his heart he paid to his divine Benefactor, offers public sacrifice before all the people of Israel, exciting them to join with him, and to render his thanksgiving more extensive and compleat; well apprised of the truth which *St. Paul* was afterwards to teach the Corinthians, viz, 1 Cor. iv. 15. The word, "precious," in the latter part of the verse does not signify, that the death of the Saints is a desirable event in the sight of the Lord; for, on the contrary, he is the preserver of their lives: but the meaning is, that their death is so valued, is rated so highly by God, that he will not easily grant it, or permit their enemies to inflict it.

Holy

Holy *David* proclaims, that God had 'broken his chairs,' had bestowed signal favours upon him, because he was his Servant, and the Son of his Hand-maid.' Thus endeavouring it should seem to attract the Divine Mercy, by confessing, he was God's most humble dependant, and slave purchased by a dear ransom. How pleasing the title of Servant, is to Heaven, God himself made known to *Jothua*, when deigning to pronounce, as it were, the funeral eulogy of *Moses*, he told him, 'my servant *Moses* is dead.' 'Twas this endearing quality of Servant or Hand-maid, that drew from Heaven the greatest and most stupendous blessing, that Omnipotence itself could impart, towards a Divine Redeemer! 'Behold the Hand-maid of the Lord,' v. 8. 'In the midst of Thee,' 'twas not lawful to offer Sacrifices out of *Jerusalem*. Hence *St. Basil* takes occasion to make an earnest address to all people who are out of the pale of the Catholic Church.

Ad Dominum cum tribularer, ps. 119. Title, Gradual Canticle.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID under the persecution of *Saul*, prays to God to defend him from the calumnies of his enemies; and at the same time laments, that his so-journing among them is pro'onged. Every Christian, may in these same plaintive strains, petition Heaven to be freed from the dangers and snares which the Adversaries of his

F : 1150

soul

soul lay for him ; and beg also that a speedy, or at least, a happy period, may be put to his earthly pilgrimage.

Translation.

Interpretation.

1. **I** Cried to the Lord
when I was afflict-
ed ; and he heard me.

I Have called upon
God invariably in
all my afflictions ; and
he has ever heard my
prayer.

2. O Lord deliver
my soul from unjust lips,
and form a deceitful
tongue.

Listen to me now al-
so O God, and guard
me from the malicious
discourses and artful in-
sinuations of my ene-
mies.

3. What shall be
given, or what shall be
appointed, to a deceit-
ful tongue ?

Base tongues ! what
can be conceived more
false and insidious than
you are ?

4. The sharp arrows
of the mighty, with
coals of desolation.

Your wounds are
more acute than those
of an arrow, shot from
the strong arm of the
bowman ! more painful
than the fierce burning
coals of the juniper
wood !

5. Woe to me, that
my pilgrimage is pro-
longed ; I have dwelt
with the inhabitants of
Cedar :

Alas to what a tedious
length is my exile drawn !
compelled to dwell a-
mong the inhabitants of
Cedar,

Cedar : my soul has
been long a stranger.

6. I was peaceable
with those who hated
peace ; when I spoke
to them, they opposed
me without cause.

Cedar, how long have
I languished in this fo-
reign land.

I am for ever sur-
rounded with enemies !
I who am so great a lo-
ver of peace ! nay, 'tis
my pacific temper aug-
ments their causeless
rage.

COMMENT.

V. 1, 2. Saint *Hilary* makes this distinction be-
tween ' wicked lips,' and a ' deceitful tongue ;'
that the former denote an open bare-faced ene-
my of virtue and religion ; but that this latter,
marks a secret treacherous Adversary, who un-
dermines the truth, by propagating false doctrine
covertly ; and saps the foundation of morality
under the mask of hypochrify.

V. 3, 4. Some interpreters render these verses,
thus ; the deceitful tongue penetrates like arrows ;
burns like devouring coals ; the deceitful ' tongue
is a fire, a world of iniquity, set on fire by hell.'
James iii. 6. Others explain them by asking ;
what security is there, or what can possibly be
opposed against a lying tongue ? Nothing is a
match for it but the power and justice, or the
sharp arrow of the mighty, and his avenging
fire ? St. *Chrysostom* comments upon this passage
by apostrophising the false tongue and its owner

to this purport; what profit do you expect to reap from this practise of backbiting and slandering? what will be its end? what the reward thereof? what, but arrows of the Mighty, with coals which lay waste: Then shall you pray in vain, that Lazarus may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool your deceitful tongue. St. Hieron translates the Hebrew, 'coals of Juniper,' which emit a fierce heat, and are remarkable for retaining it a long time. Cardanus says, that the trunk of the Juniper tree burnt to a coal, and covered up in its ashes, will preserve heat and fire for a twelvemonth, l. 8. de Subtil.

Inhabitants of Cedar. The Mahometans or Arabians, who were the descendants of Cedar, the son of Ismael; from whom probably came the people now called Saracens. Menoc.

Levavi Oculos Meos. psalm 120. Title Gradual Canticle.

ARGUMENT.

ACCORDING to Cardinal Bellarmine, this psalm was made for the use of the Jews, who went pilgrims up to Jerusalem. The prophet comforts the pilgrim with an assurance of the Divine protection, by declaring his own trust and confidence in God, at all times, and in all dangers. The good Christian who strives to advance from one degree of virtue to another, in his way to eternal felicity, will adopt the sentiments contained in this gradual hymn with pleasure and advantage.

Tran-

Translation.

1. **I** Lifted up my eyes
to the mountains,
from whence help will
come to me.

2. My help is from
the Lord, who made
heaven and earth.

3. May he not suffer
thy foot to be moved;
nor may he sleep who
keeps thee.

4. Behold he will
not slumber, nor sleep,
who keeps Israel.

5. The Lord keeps
thee, the Lord is thy
protection on thy right-
hand.

6. The sun shall not
burn thee by day, nor
the moon by night.

7. The

Interpretation.

I Have turned my
eyes towards the
holy mountains, from
whence the wished for
succour is to come.

On those mountains
dwells the Lord, who
made heaven and earth:
'tis he who is to succour
me.

That good Lord will
not let you sink under
your afflictions; his
eyes are open to assist
and protect you.

Yes, the Lord is ever
watchful over the well-
fare of his servants, and
nothing can prevent or
call off his attention.

He will guard you;
he will defend you; he
will be always present
with you.

You shall not be hurt
by the rays of the sun;
nor by the influence of
the moon; both night
and day you shall not
rest secure from dangers
of every kind.

F 3

He

7. The Lord keeps thee from all evil : may the Lord keep thy soul.

He will ward off from you all manner of evil.

8. May the Lord keep thy coming in, and thy going out; from this present, and for ever.

He will be always attentive to your preservation, whither-soever you go; in whatsoever you do, the Lord will be your assistant.

COMMENT.

The Jews were accustomed to turn their eyes towards Jerusalem, if they were in banishment, or without the city-walls : and towards the temple when they were within the city. It would ill become us Christians, says St. *Ambrose*, of whom so much greater perfection is expected than from the Jews, to be out-done by that carnal-minded people ; we ought therefore continually to look towards the heavenly Jerusalem, from whence faith assures us, ‘ all our help is to come,’ with a firm confidence of receiving from him who made ‘ heaven and earth,’ that relief and aid which ’twould be vain and sinful, to expect from poor, impotent creatures.

The psalmist encourages the pilgrim, and in him all mankind, to persevere in putting his trust in God ; to overlook the vanities here below, and fix his affections on God, who dwells above. That God, who will be with you wheresoever you go ; who will preserve you from falling ; who will defend you from all dangers ; who will not
remit

remit of his care, by being subject to sleep or slumber.

From its being said that God ' will not suffer your feet to be moved,' we are not to infer says St. *Hilary*, that we ever fall into sin, thro' a neglect or want of providential care in the Almighty *, God never abandons us, unless we first abandon him : When he leaves us then, indeed we quickly swerve from the narrow path of salvation, into the broad road of perdition.

V. 6. The moon may be said to burn, by it's chilling influence, no less than the sun with it's rays : The effects of excessive cold are expressed by the word ' burn,' both by prophane and sacred writers, Genes. xxxi. 40. And Tacit. Ann. l. 13. † The psalmist perhaps alludes to the cloud which preceded the Israelites by day, and shaded them from the scorching sun; and to the pillar of fire, which afforded them it's friendly warmth by night ; in a mystical sense he prays, that no danger may accrue either from prosperity or adversity.

V. 8. Solomon makes a like petition, iii. Kings 3. 7. viz. for wisdom and prudence in his conduct, both public and private. The like occurs, ii. Paral. 1. 10. St. *Austin* applies the verse to the coming on, and going of, or the beginning and end of Temptation. ||.

Lætatus.

* Discedente deo a nobis, in omnes delictorum foveas & per amplestissimam mortis viam curriamus.

† Ambusti multorum artus vi frigoris ; & quidam inter excubias exanimate sunt.

|| Quando tentamur, intramus ; quando vincimus tentationem, eximus.

Lætatus sum in his. Ps. 121. Title gradual
Canticle.

ARGUMENT.

IN this pathetic canticle are expressed the sentiments and feelings of the Captive Jews upon receiving the glad tidings of their being allowed to return to Jerusalem, and therein once again, to visit the Temple of God and celebrate their usual Festivals. The Divine Spirit who inspired the Psalmist to write for our use and edification, intends, no doubt, that we should turn our thoughts to the Jerusalem which is above; and to that Festival which we hope one day to keep in company of Myriads of Angels and Saints. [AA]

Translation.

1 **I** Rejoiced at those things which were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord.

2. Our feet were standing in thy courts, O Jerusalem.

3. Jerusalem, which is built as a city; whose inhabitants are united together.

4. For thither the tribes ascended, the tribes

Interpretation.

I Rejoiced exceedingly; on hearing that we should once again enter into the house of the Lord,

O Jerusalem, soon shall we set our feet again within thy Temple.

O Jerusalem, thou wert built for the abode of a people who delight to live in peace and Harmony.

For according to the promise made to Israel.

Thou

tribes of the Lord, the testimony of Israel to confess the name of the Lord.

5. For there the seats for Judgment are set, seats for the house of David.

6. Ask the things that are to the peace of Jerusalem: and plenty to them that love thee.

7. May peace be in thy strength, and abundance in thy towers.

8. Because of my brethren and my neighbours, I spake peace of thee.

9. Be-

Thou shalt contain within thy precincts, all the Tribes which compose the people of the Lord; and therein they shall employ themselves in singing praise to God.

Therein shall be fixed the supreme court of judicature, and the seat of the empire, which was established in the house of David.

Let us pray brethren and fellow-citizens; let this be our prayer for the prosperity of Jerusalem. O holy city, may all thy friends and well-wishers enjoy peace and plenty within thy walls.

May the strength of those walls, and the towers which surround thee, secure for ever that twofold blessing.

We shall all, friends and relations meet together within thy precincts; 'tis for this reason I so eagerly wish peace to all thy inhabitants.

Within

9. Because of the house
of the Lord our God,
I sought good things for
thee.

Within thy enclosure
also, will stand the house
of God our Lord;
another pressing motive
why I put up my vows
to Heaven for thy well-
fare.

COMMENT.

In this psalm, and in many others, we may observe the wonderful affection with which the Israelites were attached to their celebrated temple in Jerusalem. After having been detained captives in a distant foreign land, when at length they found themselves at liberty to return home; the grand subject of their joy, was, not that they should now soon regain their former dwellings, their goods, and their possessions; but that they should once more revisit "the temple of the Lord." To behold the house of God, to be present in the temple of the Lord, is the glad theme of their jubily on their return from slavery. And the sad burden of their melancholy tale, during the days of their bondage, was, their being absent and excluded from the "temple of the Lord." Beside the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and we wept, when we remembered thee (O much loved) Sion." psalm. 136. This ardent inextinguishable love of Jerusalem, which glowed in the breasts of the Israelitish captives, is a pattern of that love and admiration which christians ought to entertain, of the joys of Heaven: of which Jerusalem is in scripture, the standing type;

as

as Babylon is also the great figure of the world, by studiously cherishing such a love in our hearts, we shall soften all the rigours of exile; that is, we shall be enabled to bear patiently every evil and adversity we meet with, during the time of our pilgrimage in this world; and in the hour of final release we shall be in a capacity fully to comprehend and relish the first verse of this psalm.

V. 3. After Jerusalem was destroyed by Nabuchodonosor, it no longer merited the name of city, as it contained but a few disjointed or stragling houses: but when the Persian monarch Cyrus, had given orders for its being rebuilt; and permitted the captive Hebrews to return to their native country; then Jerusalem was "built as a city which is compact together;" and its stability, unity, beauty and magnificence, by degrees, became conspicuous.

V. 4. According to the testimony or law of Israel mentioned Exod: xiii. 17. All the Israelites were obliged to repair to Jerusalem, three times in a year. The repetition of the word tribes, is a Hebraism denoting that all the tribes ascended. So in Gen. xiv. 10. For "many wells, the original has wells, wells.

V. 5. 'Twas in Jerusalem the grand council of seventy two members (six of each tribe) or the Sanhedrim was established to take cognizance of all the most intricate and important causes. Here also was the residence of their monarchs after the kingdom was settled in the house of David. so that the Israelites resorted to their metropolis not only in compliance with the injunctions of
the

the divine law, but also to satisfy the exigencies of their temporal affairs. The Sanhedrim in process of time, underwent various alterations, inso-much that the great council spoken of by our Saviour (whoever shall say Raca &c. Mat. 22d.) is thought by many to be a different tribunal from that of the seventy Elders instituted by Moses at God's command, Exod. xi. 16.

The peace of Jerusalem was, in a great measure already restored, when this and the following petitions were made. But in a mystical acceptance of the words, an admonition is convey'd to us, to pray for the peace and prosperity of the church, of which all the faithful are members, and Jesus Christ the head. This is true Catholic Charity, the reward of which is here pointed out, viz. the protection and blessing of heaven; or, 'abundance to those who love Jerusalem.' So long as the church is militant in a malicious, infidel World, her peace and happiness is never secure. The most unexpected calm may prove the fore-runner of an equally unforeseen and unthought of persecution. He alone who guides the hearts of kings and senators as he pleases, can add stability to liberty, and ensure permanence to felicity. He therefore is to be besought in behalf of his church, with all the fervour and humility, of which so bright an example is here given us by the psalmist. The motives he brings to excite us to this prayer and charity, are the noblest that can be conceived, viz. the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. These are the objects which we should have unremittingly
before

before our eyes, directing to them all our prayers and all our actions, convinced, that we were created for no other end, than to promote, according to our respective conditions and circumstances, the salvation of man, and the greater glory of God.

In Convertendo Dominus, Psalm, 125. Title, Gradual, Cant.

ARGUMENT.

THE Argument of this psalm seems to be the same as that of the 121st. Some commentators say it was compos'd when a part only of the Jews had return'd from Babylon to Jerusalem, and that the Prophet first describes the joy caus'd by their restoration, and then prays to God to compleat his mercy by bringing back the rest of their brethren, but whether the restoration was effected all at once, or successively is quite immaterial to the grand point to be principally attended to in this and every other psalm; and for which they were all originally endited, viz. our spiritual instruction and improvement. The lesson held out to us is evidently good and certain, tho' the literal meaning shou'd not be always indisputably fix'd. In the release of the Israelites from slavery we may easily discover the blessed effects of our redemption from sin and its consequent misery: and the very words which were compos'd to describe the above temporary release, were design'd also to express our gratitude to God for our own more happy and important deliverance.

G.

Tran-

Translation.

When the Lord
turned the Cap-
tivity of Sion ; we be-
came as Men comfort-
ed.

Then our mouth was
fill'd with joy : and our
tongue with gladness.

Then they shall say
among the *Gentiles* : the
Lord has done magni-
ficently with them.

The Lord has done
magnificently with us :
we are made joyful.

Turn, O Lord, our
captivity, as a Torrent
in the South.

Interpretation.

When the Lord
put an end to
the captivity of his peo-
ple, we felt the comfort
which they only know,
who pass from the ex-
tremity of misery, to
excess of happiness.

Unable to contain
our joy, we then burst
forth into canticles of
praise.

Then the *Gentiles*
wondering said, how
great things the Lord
has done for his people
of Israel.

Yes ! we ecchoed
back, the Lord has
done great things in
our behalf ! he has made
sorrow give place to
joy.

Come then, O God !
haste to break our
chains : we sigh after
thee, as the parch'd
foil of the south gapes
for the overflowing
nile.

They

You

They who sow in
tears shall reap in joy-
fulness.

Departing they went
and wept, casting their
seed.

But returning they
shall come with joyful-
ness, bearing their
sheaves.

You will break them
O Lord; and they who
now sow in tears, shall
reap in joy.

They went weeping
to exile, sorrowful as
the husbandman when
he sows his seed and
fears 'twill yield no
crop.

But they shall soon
return from captivity
loaded with the fruits of
their patience and the
merits of their suffer-
ings.

COMMENT.

V. 1. Genebrarde, Muisand Bellarmine, instead of the word "comforted" put the word "dreaming" as the original, and indeed as the subject seems to require; for the Royal proclamation of Cyrus, ordering the children of Israel to return home, was attended with such an extraordinary combination of circumstances, that it might well seem to them a dream. They had long been detain'd captives, and all at once, without any solicitations us'd on their part, or any endavours made, he issued his mandate for them to go back to their own country, to rebuild their City and Temple. Thus a vast number of useful slaves saw themselves compleatly and unexpectedly set at liberty; not only without any money or ransom

being paid, but on the contrary found themselves laden with presents! well might they mistrust their senses, seeing and hearing how wonderfully God had "brought back the captivity of Sion" 'Twas on a like surprize, *St. Peter* cou'd scarce believe himself awake, when his delivery from prison was wrought by the ministry of an Angel; but "he thought he saw a vision." Acts xii. 9.

V. 5. The comparison here instituted seems to be this: 'as the streams in the South' of Judea, or in Idumea, Arabia, &c. left their beds dry (*Job*, vi. 17) in summer, but after the rainy season fill'd again their deserted channels, reviving the parch'd lands; so may the Jews who left their country desolate "turn again," O Lord, to rebuild and make it flourish, &c. Similar metaphors were made use of by the ancient Patriarchs to express their ardent desires, and thirst, after the *Messias*, "Ye Heavens, distill like dew, and ye clouds rain the just man; let the earth open and bud forth the Saviour, *Is.* xlv. 8.

V. 6. 7. When the Jews were driven from their native country, deprived of every comfort and convenience, and forced to take shelter in a strange land among idolaters and enemies, then "going they went and wept, sowing their seed." But when by *Cyrus's* decree they had liberty to return home, and quit the mournful banks of the *Euphrates*, for the pleasant waters of *Jordan*: when the releas'd captives left haughty *Babylon* when the seat of delight, the habitation of God's chosen people, the temple of the Lord, once more blessed their eager sight; when

when the stately towers of Salem rose, once again, to view, then, "with exultation, coming they came."

A lively emblem is here exhibited of the state and condition of many a christian. They are in this world, as in a place of captivity, exil'd from their native country: and if they be faithful Israelites, that is, true christians, they will not suffer the allurements of Babylon, or of vain, earthly pleasures to take off their thoughts and affections from the city of God and his saints, from the heavenly Jerusalem. It may perhaps be their lot to "go weeping" through their pilgrimage; that is, to lead a life of sufferings, of sickness, pain, poverty or sorrow! but they comfort themselves with the reflection, that though they "sow in tears," yet if they do it with a christian patience and fortitude, shortly the day "with exultation coming it will come," when they shall "reap in joy."

Nisi Dominus custodierit, psalm 126. Tit. Gradual Canticle.

ARGUMENT.

HOLY David gives instructions concerning the rebuilding of the temple, not in his own, but in the person of Solomon, whom he represents addressing the Jews after their return from captivity; and exhorting them to trust in God, and bear up courageously against the obstructions and interruptions they met with

from their surrounding enemies. The advice is very applicable and seasonable to us Christians also: we have a spiritual building to attend to: we are to labour for our edification and improvement in virtue: we have powerful enemies to obstruct us: and if we do not imitate the Jews, by putting our trust in God, and holding the sword in one hand, as it were, whilst we build with the other; that is, if we do not keep ourselves in a constant state of defence, we shall miserably fall in the hour of temptation and assault.

Translation.

1. **E**Xcept the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it.

2. Except the Lord keeps the city, he watches in vain who keeps it.

3. It is in vain for you to rise before the Light: rise after you have sitted, you who eat the bread of sorrow.

4. When

Interpretation.

UNLESS the Lord concur to build the temple, vain are the toil and efforts of those who try to build it.

Unless the Lord deign to protect the city, 'tis to no purpose, guards are set over it.

In vain do you rise before day-break, if the Lord do not prosper your care and watchfulness, rise not until you are thoroughly refreshed, you, I say, who toil in affliction; but put your trust in God.

He

4. When he gives sleep to his beloved : He will not only procure his faithful servants the repose they stand in need of; but will aid them to encrease his chosen inheritance : children shall be born to them, who shall reward their father's confidence in the Lord.

5. As arrows in the hands of the powerful : These children shall be to the enemies of those that are rejected. so are the children of their once distressed and afflicted parents, as weapons or arrows in the hands of skilful and able archers.

6. Blessed is the man who has filled his desire of them : he shall not be confounded when he shall speak to his enemies in the gate. Happy shall be each father of such a desirable offspring. He shall have nothing to fear when he enters into treaty with his enemy before the town gate.

COMMENT.

V. 1. 2. 3. If you confide not in the Lord, more than in yourselves, your most watchful care will nought avail : you will rise daily to begin your fruitless toil anew. Here is pointed out to us a moral document of the utmost utility and perfection, we are directed not to stir in any undertaking

taking, without first consulting the will, and imploring the aid of Heaven; so much may be fairly deduced from the admonitions given in the first three verses of this psalm, a great deal of hard and useless toil may be prevented by taking along with us in all our proceedings the above necessary caution. We are ready enough to own that every human action is directed by a superintending providence: but 'tis a truth we are too apt to forget, &c. lose sight of, in the course of our conduct, a strict attention to the important duty of morning and evening prayer, [B B] and an habitual rectitude or purity of intention, wou'd remedy in a great measure, the many evils arising from our forgetfulness. The former would consecrate the transactions of each day; would stamp a value upon them; wou'd attract and affix the divine blessing to them; and ensure a recompense for them at the great day of accounts, when not only our actions but the motives that gave birth to them, and every circumstance that accompanied them, will be taken into consideration. The latter wou'd enoble every, even the most insignificant deed, by virtue of a constantly pure and well order'd intention, we may arrive gradually at the summit of perfection; to a perfect conformity with, and acquiescence in the will of God. This conformity is freedom; this is true liberty, this is felicity, this is the attainment of as much plenitude of bliss, as is compatible with a state of mortality.

V. 4

[B B] Note xxv.

V. 4. "When he shall give sleep," when God gives them peaceable times, and secure repose, &c. repeating, it shou'd seem, a promise which was made to David, 2d Kings, vii. 11.

V. 5. "As arrows, &c." Be not dismayed because you are thus 'shaken,' by your enemies: (the Jews were, occasionally, insulted and assaulted by the bordering people, for near twenty years after Cyrus's edict) peace will be restored to you, and in the mean time your children will grow up to be your firm support and defence against every assailant: 'like arrows,' wing'd with duty and with love, they will be ready to fly to your assistance: well polished and keen, they will grace and maintain your cause.

V. 6. "He shall not be confounded." His children will prevent his being disgraced when called upon to meet his enemies, either in a court of judicature, or field of battle, for the 'gate,' was the seat of war as well as law. Judg. v. 8. Thus parents of tried virtue, were to derive on all occasions, defence and security, from the strength and prowess of their children. The Chinese, 'tis said, have a proverb expressive of their confidence in their children's power and affection, and opposite to the present subject: when a son is born into a family, a bow and arrow is hung before the door.' St. *Hilary* on this verse and the preceding, observes, that it does not appear from history, that the children here spoken of were as formidable to their enemies, as even their fathers had been: and that therefore the words of the psalm are more suitably understood,

stood of the church of Christ, and her primitive Children, the Apostles and first Christians. These were actually the children or descendants of the Israelites; and truly arrows in the hand of the Mighty" (Jesus) with which he encountered his enemies; and by the splendor of their sanctity and efficacy of their preaching, subdued the nations to his faith, and brought them within the gate of his church.

Lauda Jerusalem Dominum, psalm 147. Tit.
Allelujah.

ARGUMENT.

THERE is an internal evidende in this psalm, that it relates to the days of peace and security which the Jews enjoyed, after they had rebuilt the walls, and completed the repairs of their beloved city of Jerusalem; in a spiritual sense it regards the church of Jesus Christ, which, like Jerusalem of old, is established and preserved by the power and wisdom of God. And by an easy and regular progression, all the benefits and blessings here spoken of, may be referred finally to the everlasting city, described in the apocalypse, where the enjoyment of them will be perfected in bliss secure, unchangeable and indefeisible.

Translation,

* Excussi sunt quidem de manu domini.

Et ierunt longe, & totam terram impleverunt,

Unde pullulant sancti.

St. Aug.

Translation.	Interpretation.
1. O Jerusalem praise the Lord; praise thy God, O Sion.	J erusalem praise the Lord, Sion sing forth the praises of your God.
2. Because he has strengthened the locks of thy gates; he has blessed thy children in thee.	He has fortified your gates, and secured you from the insults of your enemies; he has loaded your inhabitants with favours.
3. Who has placed peace in thy borders, and fills thee with the fat of corn.	He has established peace in your frontiers; and left you at full leisure to taste the sweetness of plenty.
4. Who sends forth his speech to the earth: his word runs swiftly.	'Tis he who sends down his commands upon earth; and they are executed promptly.
5. Who gives snow as wool; scatters mist as ashes.	'Tis he who warms the earth with snow, as with a cover of wool; and dries it with a mist, as with ashes.
6. He sends his chrystal as morsels: who shall abide before the face of his cold?	He strews upon it ice, like so many bits of chrystal; and causes a cold scarce to be endured.
7. He will send forth his word, and shall melt them:	But at his command, ice and snow melt away; the

them : his spirit shall
breath, and the waters
shall flow.

8. Who declares his
word to Jacob : his
justice and judgments
to Israel.

9. He has not done
in like manner to every
nation : and his judg-
ments he has not mani-
fested to them.

the south winds blow ;
and the waters resume
their wanted fluidity.

'Tis this great God
who declared his will
and precepts to the
house of Jacob, and
made known his law to
the people of Israel.

He has not conducted
himself so favourably in
regard of any other na-
tion ; he has not deign'd
to furnish them with in-
structions ; nor lay up-
on them his injunctions.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1, 2, 3. The city of Jerusalem was
freed from the assaults of her enemies, and be-
gan to enjoy the blessings of peace, during the
latter part of the reign of King David. The
same happiness was continued all the days of
Solomon, and under several monarchs until the
captivity of Babylon ; after which disaster peace
returned again to Sion, together with the Inha-
bitants, during the reign of the Persian King
Cyrus ; and finally, under Darius, was " placed
in the borders."

V. 4. View the power of thy deliverer, O
Jerusalem (says St. Chrysostom and St. Hilary) in
the speedy accomplishment of his will : He
speaks

speaks the word ; and swiftly earth obeys the High Behest !

V. 5, 6, 7. Here follow samples of that power of which the Psalmist has been speaking : the fleecy snow, the chrystal hail, the hoary frost, will never cease to appear evident instances of omnipotence, when viewed with a religious and philosophic eye ; however unnotic'd they may pass, in the succession of seasons, by a thoughtless spectator. St. *Hilary* spiritualizes these verses with his usual judgment and piety ; allegorizing and explaining the wonders of divine grace, by the stupendous works of nature. The whole extract would be too long for this place, but the conclusion and application is short, and so pleasingly exprest, that the latin reader will readily excuse my inserting it. Solventur hæc omnia, nivis, pruinæ, chrystalli frigora, tanquam flatu repentî ; tum, cum, post hos sæcularis noctis rigores, tempora illa regni æterni, in unam atque indemutabilem tranquillitatem, Dei spiritus temperabat.

V. 8, 9. From the creation of the world, God never fail'd to declare in some measure " his justice and his judgements," to mankind, by engraving on their hearts the law of nature : but the people of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, were the first and most distinguished nation, to whom it pleased his divine Majesty to deliver his law and commandments, in a clear, formal, and explicit manner.

Beati omnes qui timent Dominum. psalm 127.
Title, Gradual Canticle.

ARGUMENT.

THE promises of the old law had temporal blessings for their object. It is this kind of blessing which is here offered by the Prophet, to the people of God, as a reward for their fidelity in his service, but even among the ancient Jews, they who in imitation of their renown'd Patriarch Abraham "lived by faith," did not confine their views to a transient prosperity, but exalted them to the more permanent and desirable happiness of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Translation.

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, that walk in his ways.

Because thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands : thou art happy, and it shall be well with thee.

Thy wife shall be as a plentiful vine on the side of thy house.

Thy

Interpretation.

Happy the man who fears the Lord, and walks in the way of his commandments.

Yes, if you fear the Lord he will give success to your labours, and you will taste the fruits of them ; you will be both rich and happy.

Your wife ever pleas'd to be at home, like a fruitful vine, shall bring you a numerous progeny.

Your

Thy children as young
olive-trees round about
thy table.

Behold so shall the
man be blessed, who
fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless
thee from *Sion* : and
mayst thou see the
prosperity of *Jerusalem*
all the days of thy life.

And mayst thou see
thy children's children,
peace upon Israel,

Your children shall
throng round your ta-
ble : as pleasing a sight
as a verdant cluster of
young olive trees.

Such are the bles-
sings in store for the
man who fears the
Lord.

From the mountains
of *Sion* the Lord will
shower down his bles-
sings upon you all the
days of your life, you
shall behold *Jerusalem*
flourishing and opulent.

You shall live to see
your children's child-
ren : and peace reign-
ing throughout Israel.

COMMENT.

V. 1, 2. Our fear of God to ensure happi-
ness must be filial, and join'd with such a degree
of the love of God * as may excite us to obey
his commands with cheerfulness. A mere servile
fear is consistent with, nay the usual concomitant
of misery itself : even the Devils fear God at the
very time they curse his omnipotence.

V. 3. A fair virtuous wife, mother of many
children was a temporal blessing, peculiarly ac-
cepta-

H 2

* Nobis autem timor Domini.
Omnis in amore est. St. HIL.

ceptable to the ancient Israelites above all other people, because every father of an Israelitish family indulged himself with the fond hope that from his race would spring the Messiah. The Prophet compares the chaste and fruitful spouse to a fertile vine which with its beautifully luxuriant and fragrant clusters, adorns the "sides of the house," to which it is joined. Those Husbands, who are bless'd with such Wives, will be best sensible of the justness of the comparison; and like skilful and prudent masters of a vineyard, will shew them a tender care.

V. 4. Some writers mention, that the inhabitants of the east frequently planted olive trees round their tables, in their bowers or dining-rooms. The springing, chearing verdure of these young olives in their perennial foliage, and the fragrant odour they emit, are intended by the divine poet, to convey an idea of the pleasure virtuous parents feel, in seeing themselves surrounded by a numerous and prosperous progeny.

V. 5. We are not to infer from the particle, 'thus,' that every man who fears God, is to be blessed with a virtuous wife and flourishing offspring: not even the carnal Jews could give it this strict interpretation. They must have seen and heard of many just men who feared God, and yet were unmarried or childless, or, possibly, unhappy in their wives or children; and of many true servants of God, who with obedient wives and dutiful children, laboured under affliction, sickness and poverty. The only just inference therefore

therefore, to be made from this description of the psalmist, is that the blessings depicted, were, or would be the usual, or frequent reward of piety : and that whatever state of life, and condition Heaven should allot those who fear and serve God, they could not fail to be happy. Tho' they should be buried like a Joseph in a prison, or plunged like a Job, into an abyss of sufferings, still their happiness would be secure, not that a dungeon or a dung-hill may be deemed happiness : but that they would be happy in enduring, and suffering for the love of God ; they would be happy to know his will and pleasure was fulfilled : happy to feel that the transient pressure of their affliction was exceeding light, when put into the balance, with the ' weight of eternal glory.' 2 Cor. 4.

De Profundis Clamavi, psalm. 129. Title
Gradual Canticle.

ARGUMENT.

COMMENTATORS refer the subject matter of this psalm to the Babylonish exile; it is numbered among both the gradual and the penitential hymns. The sentiments it contains, are well adopted to to all who consider themselves in a state of banishment from their heavenly country : and its petitions are set for the mouth of every sinner, who is desirous of deprecating divine justice and imploring mercy. The peculiar fitness of the expressions, perhaps, determined the church in appropriating this psalm to her office for the dead; and in selecting it for one of the principles

cipal, or most usual prayers, which she puts up to the throne of grace, in behalf of all such of her departed members, as she fears to be detained a while from the bliss of Heaven, in a suffering state of purgation.

Translation.

1. **F**ROM the depths
I have cried to
thee O Lord: Lord hear
my voice.

2. Let thy ears be
attentive to the voice
of my prayer.

3. If thou wilt ob-
serve iniquities O Lord:
Lord who shall sustain
it?

4. Because there is
propitiation with thee:
and for thy law I have
expected thee O Lord.

5. My

Interpretation.

FROM the deep abyfs
of that misery into
which I am fallen, I
send my cries to thee
O Lord: turn not I
beseech thee a deaf ear
to them.

Deign to hear the
petition of one, who
has no other resource
left him, save your
mercy.

I know how guilty
I am in thy sight! but
if you take cognizance
of our crimes with ri-
gour, whom will thy
judgement acquit?

In ourselves there is
no room for pardon;
but in your goodness
there is a plea: 'tis a
law with you to forgive
repenting criminals: on
this mild law we ground
our hopes O Lord.

I have

5. My Soul has expected in his word : my soul has hoped in the Lord.

I have never forgotten the promises of the Lord ; they have been my support in all my troubles : I have ever hoped in the Lord.

6. From the morning watch even till night, let Israel hope in the Lord.

Let Israel therefore never cease to hope in the Lord ; the assistance which their prayers in the day-time could not obtain, may be granted to their petitions at night.

7. Because with the Lord is mercy : and with him abundant redemption.

For the mercy of the Lord is infinite, and there is reserved in the inexhaustible treasure of his goodness, and power, a remedy for all our evils.

8. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

And his people will be shortly delivered from the calamities which their iniquities have drawn upon them.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1, 2. From the consideration of the deep abyss of God's judgements ; or of the depth of sin incurred ; or of the depth of misery occasioned

ed by sin ; or of the depth of purgatory ; or of the depth of his own heart ; from the consideration of each, or either of these depths, a Christian may be well induced to ‘ cry to the Lord.’

V. 3, 4, 5. The psalmist seems hitherto to have had respect solely to the motives, urging him to seek God’s pardon ; he now rehearses the grounds he had to hope he should find it, viz. the law, the word, the promise, the goodness of his offended Lord ! these assure him that “ according to the height of the heaven above the earth, he hath strengthened his mercy towards them that fear him : as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our iniquities from us.” ps. 102. v. 11. 12. ‘ Who shall sustain it, seems to import, that no man could sustain, or stand in the judgement of God, if at his divine tribunal, the iniquities of man were to be examined into, and proceeded against, with a rigorous justice : so that, in this supposition, the whole race of mankind must remain under the punishment of sin, and the enmity of their maker to all eternity. The very Heathens of old seem to have been convinced in like manner, of the necessity of divine mercy, or at least to have entertained sentiments, * which seem in some degree to coincide with those of the Psalmist.

V. 6. The repetitions, “ I have hoped,” my soul hoped, “ let Israel hope,” &c. do beautifully

* Si quoties homines peccant, sua fulmina mittat
Jupiter, exiguo tempore inermis erit.

Ovid de Trist. l. 2.

fully express the ardent desire which every true penitent has of pardon and salvation.

The morning watch here spoken of, was the person assigned by the priests, (who were to officiate in the temple by turns) to watch the first appearance of break of day, at which time the morning oblation was made. [CC]

V. 7. 8. St. *Chrysostom*, whose writings abound with just, yet awful documents, makes some very comfortable reflections, when he treats of "the mercy which is with the Lord, and his plentiful redemption." To an ingenuous mind, the inexpressible love of God to man, and his superabundant mercies, are a most powerful incentive to repentance, rather than an encouragement to sin. Those servile and perverse tempers, who offend their Saviour because he is good, and prone to pardon, would do well to contrast what is here spoken by the psalmist, with what St. *Peter* addresses particularly to each of them, "knowest thou not, that according to thy hard and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath."

Memento Domine David, psalm 131. Title Gradual Cant.

ARGUMENT.

THEY who contend that David composed the entire psalter, say, that this psalm was made by him for the use of Solomon, to be sung on

[CC] Note xxvi.

on the occasion of his transporting the ark into the new temple, which holy David, notwithstanding the zeal shewn by him in preparing a place for its habitation, was not to effect. The whole composition is typical of that zeal and ardour, which was manifested by the first founders of the church of Jesus Christ, for its establishment. And it points out that earnestness of desire, with which every true member should be animated for the perfection and consummation of this spiritual edifice, of which, according to scripture he is himself a living stone.

Translation.

1. **R**emember David, O Lord, and all his meekness,

2. As he swore to the Lord: he vowed a vow to the God of Jacob:

3. If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house, if I shall ascend into the bed of my couch:

4. If I shall give sleep to my eyes, and slumber to my eye lids:

5. And

Interpretation.

Be mindful O Lord of thy servant David; and of his patience, and of his modesty.

Asbamed to dwell in his palace, whilst the ark rested under an humble tent, he vowed thus to the Lord God of Jacob.

I will not enter into my house, nor go up into my chamber.

I will not close my eyes to sleep: nor my eye lids to slumber.

Neither

5. And rest to my temples : till I find a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

6. Behold we have heard it was in Ephrata : we have found it in the forests.

7. We will enter into his tabernacle : we will adore in the place, where his feet stood.

8. Arise O Lord into thy rest, thou and the Ark of thy sanctification.

9. Let thy priests be clothed with justice : and let thy saints rejoice.

10. For thy servant David

Neither will I lay my head down to rest, till I have found a place, and taken proper measures to build a temple to the Lord God of Jacob.

We have heard from our fore-fathers, that the ark of this great God was in Ephrata ; we found it in the fields of the forest.

Now that we have built a temple for the Lord, we will enter it with joy ; and pay our adorations in the holy place, in which he will deign to dwell.

Rise then O Lord, thou and the ark the glory of thy name ; and abide in the house we have prepar'd for thee.

May thy priests and all who minister in this temple honour thee in holiness, and serve thee with chearfulness.

For the sake of my father

David, turn not away
the face of thy Christ.

11. The Lord has
sworn truth to David,
and he will not disap-
point it : I will set upon
thy seat thy own off-
spring.

12. If thy children
shall keep my testament,
and these my testimo-
nies, which I will teach
them :

13. And their chil-
dren even for ever, they
shall sit upon thy seat.

14. Because the Lord
has chosen Sion : the
Lord has chosen it for
his own habitation.

15. This is my rest
for ever and ever : here
I will dwell, because I
have chosen it.

16. Blessing I will
bless her widow : her
poor I will fill with
bread.

17. Her

father David reject me
not, after having raised
me to his throne.

No, the Lord has
sworn to David, and
his oath cannot fail ; I
will place, said he to
him, your children on
the throne which you
occupy.

If they prove faithful
to keep my law ; if
they observe the com-
mandments which I
shall give them.

Their children shall
succeed to the same
throne to the latest pos-
terity.

For 'tis with a view
to their protection and
preservation, that I
have made choice of
Sion for my habitation.

I will settle herein
for ever ; I will dwell
here, having prefer'd
this place to all others.

In it I will pour
down my blessings on
the widow ; and glad-
den the hearts of the
poor with plenty.

In

17. Her priests I will cloath with salvation : and her saints shall rejoice with joyfulness.

18. Thither I will bring the power of David, I have prepared a lamp for my Christ.

19. I will cloath his enemies with confusion: but upon him my sanctification shall flourish.

In it I will sanctify my priests, and my ministers shall serve me with alacrity.

I will cause the empire of David to flourish ; I will provide for the prince whom I love, an illustrious posterity.

I will cover his enemies with confusion : and the sacred diadem which he has worn, shall shine for ever on the heads of his descendants.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1. The meekness and patience of holy David shone very conspicuously in his conduct with regard to Saul, to Joab, to Semei and to Absalom, in these and other occurrences of his life, he was a true figure of that divine Personage, whose favourite virtue enforc'd by word and example was mild humility " learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart." Mat. xi. 19.

V. 2. 5. The oath here spoken of is not upon record in scripture ; many other instances occur of particulars mention'd in the psalms, which are not to be met with in any other part of the bible, but tho' the express oath, or vow be not to be
I found

found in the sacred history; yet we read there that the pious Monarch was uneasy, and quite troubled, at the thought of his dwelling in a palace of Cedar whilst the ark of God dwelt only in a tent. 2 Kings. vii. 2. and 1 Paral. xvii. 1. and that he gave himself with the most unwearied diligence to lay in a plentiful store of the most costly materials, such as, silver, gold, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, &c. and a profusion of whatever was necessary and proper for the construction and ornament of a most magnificent temple. 1 Paral. 29.

V. 6. If the ark be here spoken of, the meaning is that it was found in the field of Joshua the Bethsamite near Cariathiarim; a name which signifies, The "woody town," and by the Ephrata here mention'd, is to be understood Silo in the territory of Ephraim; as it does not appear from scripture that the ark was ever carried to Bethlehem, furnam'd Ephrata. But if only the place where the ark was to stand be here intimated, by the Prophet; then the verse according to most interpreters is to be render'd to this purport, "we have heard of the place where God will fix his habitation, viz. in the region of Bethlehem Ephrata. Gen. c. 35. v. xiii. 19. in the fields of that forest, where the Angel stood and directed me to build an altar to the Lord. 1 Paral. c. xxi. 18. &c. and c. xxii. 16. The reason why the place, or seat of the ark and temple is call'd Ephrata rather than Jerusalem, seems to be this: The greater part of Jerusalem was of the tribe of Benjamin: but the temple, by divine appointment, was to be built in the territory belonging

to the tribe of Juda: 'Twas incumbent on the Prophet to shew this ; which he did, by mentioning Ephrata, a place included in the territory of Bethlehem, which it was well known, was of the inheritance of Juda.

V. 7. David was not permitted to build the temple ; but he congratulates the Israelites that the ark was at length fix'd on the spot God had chosen the temple should stand on : and that he could " go and adore where his feet stood."

V. 8. 9. 10. These three verses were us'd by Solomon at the conclusion of his prayer, at the dedication of the temple. 2 Paral. c. 6. v. 41, 42. and the purport of them seems to be a petition to God that his divine presence might rest upon Sion and dwell finally in the house prepar'd for it, after having mov'd so frequently along with the ark both in the desert and in Palestine.*

Turn not away " deny not the request of David's son now " anointed" to be King over Israel, and by so doing, put him to shame or " turn aside his face." so Adoniah says to Bethsabe " deny me not" in the original " turn not away my face."

V. 11. This oath is explained by St. *Peter* of Jesus Christ. Acts ii 30. " whereas therefore he was a Prophet and knew, that God had sworn to

I 2

him

* The frequent journeying of the ark and tabernacle gave occasion to the learned Spencer to contend that the tabernacle and all its furniture was an imitation of the portable temples of the heathens, and of the custom of carrying their gods along with them in their migrations from one country to another. Errantesquem deos agitateque numina Troje. VIR.

him with an oath that of the fruit of his loins, one should sit upon his throne.

V. 12. 13. The meaning is; if thy children keep my covenant, &c. for ever; then, their children shall sit on thy throne.†

V. 14. 15. The Almighty continued his abode in Sion 'till the iniquities of the Israelites provoked him to forsake it, and give up Jerusalem for a prey to the enemy. The spiritual Sion or Catholic Church alone, is the abode in which the spirit of God will actually rest for ever. That Lord “ who hath sworn in truth unto David” hath sworn likewise that his divine presence “ shall remain with the Church to the end of the world.”

V. 18. I will produce or protract the horn, i. e. the crown of David.* I will produce the regal power and majesty of David afresh in his royal Successors until the days of John the Baptist “ whom I have prepared as a lamp for mine anointed.” John v. 35.

Confitebor tibi Domine, Psalm 137. Title.

ARGUMENT.

TIS uncertain on what occasion this psalm was made; some refer it to the persecution from

† “ Usque in sæculum,” non conjungitur cum “ sedebunt” sed cum “ si custodierit” ut patet ex Hebræo.

BELLARM.

* Cornue Regni insigne est; per hoc Cornue unguentum regum regnaturis infundebatur. St. Hilar.

from Saul; others to the rebellion of Absalon. The contents make it evident that the Royal Psalmist had been in great affliction and danger; the deliverance from which he celebrates in strong and emphatic terms. Every christian should in conjunction with the Psalmist resolve to praise God for every deliverance wrought and favour received: and in particular for the greatest of all mercies, his redemption and salvation thro' Jesus Christ.

Translation.

1. **I** Will confest to thee
O Lord with my
whole heart: because
thou hast heard the
words of my mouth.

2. I will sing to thee
in the sight of Angels:
I will adore in thy holy
temple, and I will con-
fess to thy name.

3. Upon thy mercy
and thy truth: because
thou hast magnified thy
holy name above every
thing.

4. In what day so-
ever

Interpretation.

I Will praise thee O
God, with all the
ardour gratitude can in-
spire; I will bless thee,
for thou hast heard my
prayers.

I will adore thee in
thy temple, I will sing
thy praise in presence of
the angels; I will bless
thy holy name.

I will praise thy mercy
and thy fidelity to thy
promises; I will praise
thee for having exalted
above all things the
glory of thy holy name.

Continue O Lor. o
I 3 pre-

ever I shall invoke thee, hear me: thou wilt multiply strength in my soul.

5. Let all the kings of the earth confess to thee O Lord: because they have heard all the words of thy mouth.

6. And let them sing in the ways of the Lord: because the glory of the Lord is great.

7. For the Lord is high, and beholds the low things: and knows the high things from far.

8. If I walk in the midst of affliction, thou wilt

protect me in whatsoever hour I shall call upon thee; hasten to assist me: as dangers arise fail not O Lord to grant me fresh strength to encounter them.

May all the kings of the earth praise thee O Lord, for the great things which they know thou hast done for me, in fulfilling all thy promises to me.

May they publish thy glory, when they reflect on thy wonderful proceedings, and thy whole conduct towards me.

May they proclaim every where that the Lord is great; that he nevertheless deigns to notice what seems low and humble in this world; and despises those things which the world counts grand, and deems highly of.

Though therefore I should fall again into tribulation;

wilt enliven me : and thou hast extended thy hand upon the wrath of my enemies, and thy right-hand has saved me.

bulation, still thou O Lord woud'st support me : thou woud'st make known thy power to my enemies ; and (as hitherto it hath). Thy right-hand would deliver me from all dangers.

9. The Lord will render for me : thy mercy O Lord is for ever : despise not the works of thy hands.

Yes the Lord will revenge my cause ; thy mercy O God endureth for ever ; forsake not then the work of thy hands.

C O M M E N T.

V. 1, 2. A variety of expressions here concur, all tending to shew the abundance of that gratitude with which the heart of the prophet glowed. I will praise, I will sing praise before the angels, I will worship, I will give glory, &c. all which means, I will be grateful to my God : I will acknowledge and proclaim in the sight of angels and of men, of heaven and of earth " thy mercy and thy truth," thro' which thou hast " magnified thy name," over every thing that opposes it. D. B. Instead of, " Angels," the Hebrew has " Gods," that is, kings and princes, and men of power, &c. Menoc.

Adore

Adore, "to or towards thy temple," alludes to the custom of the Jews, in praying with their faces towards the temple, when in exile, or whenever they were debarred from access to it. D. B. See p. 66.

V. 4. The petition here made is purely spiritual; the prophet asks not for temporal power, riches, &c. but for "strength in his soul." When our prayers terminate disinterestedly in the welfare of our souls, we may remain confident of success; we may then dare to address God with a "hear me in whatsoever day I shall invoke thee."

V. 5, 6, 7. These verses breath a piety worthy of a David. 'Let all the kings of the earth, who have heard all thy words,' who have been witnesses of the accomplishment of thy great and gracious promises made in my favour, let them proclaim, O God, thy glory, reflecting on thy wonderful proceedings, and inscrutable conduct, "let them sing in the ways of the Lord," let them publish to the world how different are thy ways Lord, from the ways of man; for the Lord is high, and he beholds low things. He has taken me from the lowest station, from among the flocks and herds, and placed me on the throne to rule over his people; whereby Saul in the midst of all his pride and grandeur, was despised and rejected by him, because "high things, he knows far off."

V. 8. God is most eminently our great deliverer, when he "enlivens us in the midst of tribulation."

lation." The utmost "rage" of our enemies, does then serve only to expose their own impotence, and render more illustrious "the right-hand of God." *St. Chrys.*

V. 9. Holy David full of confidence in God, disdains to pay any attention to his own injured honour; "the Lord will repay for me;" he commits the reparation of it to him who has said, "mine is revenge." A more welcome consideration engrosses the Prophet's mind; he delights not to dwell on the injustice of his enemies; but rather on the mercy of his deliverer. "Thy mercy O Lord, is for ever. *St. Hilar.*

Domine probasti me, psalm 138. Tit. unto the end of psalms of David.

ARGUMENT.

IT seems uncertain on what particular occasion this excellent psalm was written: we know in general that it was during a time when the holy Prophet was persecuted and calumniated; for we find him towards the end of it appealing to God to judge between him and his enemies. We are presented in the former part with a sublime description of God's infinite knowledge and his ubiquity or coexistence with all time and place. The obvious moral to be drawn from the whole instructive composition is, that we ought to live in constant awe of a judge, whose knowledge nothing can escape; and before whose tribunal, we are daily liable to be summoned.

Tran-

Translation.

THou hast prov'd me, O Lord, and hast known me : thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up.

2. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off : my path, my cord thou hast searched out.

3. And thou hast foreseen all my ways : for there is not a word on my tongue.

4. Behold, O Lord, thou hast known the last things, and them of old, thou hast formed me, and hast put thy hand upon me.

5. Thy knowledge is become wonderful of me :

Interpretation.

LORD thou searchest me, thou knowest me well : whether I be in action, or whether at repose ; thine eyes are ever upon me, I can hide nothing from thy sight.

Thou knowest even my future thoughts : thou art acquainted with the measures I shall take to accomplish designs which I have not yet formed.

Thou discoverest my most secret intentions, though I whisper not a word concerning them.

Yes, O Lord, what I now do, what I shall do at the most distant period ; is all intimately known to thee : and how indeed couldst thou be ignorant of any thing regarding me, who am the work of thy hands.

Thy knowledge is wonderful, far above my

me : it is great and I cannot reach it.

6. Whither shall I go from thy spirit ; and whither shall I fly from thy face.

7. If I shall ascend into heaven, thou art there : if I descend into hell, thou art present.

8. If I shall take my wings early, and dwell in the extreme parts of the sea.

9. Even there also shall thy hand conduct me : and thy right-hand will hold me.

10. And I said : perhaps darkness will tread upon me : and the night is my illumination in my delights.

my poor capacity : it is infinitely extensive, and therefore utterly incomprehensible to me.

Whither can I go to be out of the reach of this knowledge : to what place shall I fly, to get beyond thy sight.

If I could climb to heaven thou art there : if I could sink to the center of the earth, thou art there likewise.

If I had wings and could take flight at break of day, and penetrate to the farthest boundaries of the sea.

Still it must be thy hand which would conduct me, and I could by no means escape from it.

If I flattered myself that darkness would hide me from thee, I should be egregiously mistaken: even the night would cast a glare upon my sins, and discover them to thee.

11. For

Dark-

11. For darkness shall not be obscured from thee, and the night shall be enlightened as the day: as its darkness, so also is its light.

12. For thou hast possess'd my reins; thou hast received me from my mothers womb.

13. I will confess to thee because thou art terribly magnified: thy works are wonderful, and my soul knows it exceedingly.

14. My bone is not hid from thee, which thou madest in secret: and my substance in the lower parts of the earth.

15. They

Darkness is no obscurity to thee: the night in thy regard is as clear and bright as the day; the light can discover nothing to human eyes, which to thine are not discoverable amidst the thickest darkness.

Thou hast formed all the interior and exterior parts of my body in the obscurity of the maternal womb.

I will praise thee O Lord for the surprising wisdom which thou hast, in so doing, displayed: thy works are astonishing; and I am never weary of searching into them.

Thine eyes look thro' my flesh and see how to form the bones therein, thou beholdest me when yet in embryo, as Thou beholdest rude and unfinished productions in the bowels of the earth.

Thou

15. Thy eyes have seen my imperfection, and all shall be written in thy book: days shall be formed, and no man in them.

16. But to me thy friends are exceedingly honourable, O God: their principality is confirmed exceedingly.

17. I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand: I rose up, and am yet with thee.

18. If thou, O God, shouldst kill sinners: you men of blood depart from me.

Thou didst view me when I was as yet but a shapeless mass: all my members were drawn out in the book of thine ideas: in a few days thou didst form them after this model: and none were waiting to me.

But the tenderness of thy providence is most conspicuous, when exerted in favour of thy friends: so illustrious thou render'st their power; so bright their glory.

Thou causest them to encrease like grains of sand; and this thy favour to them excites me, O God, to adhere to thee more diligently than ever.

On the contrary when I see how thou destroyest sinners, I exclaim; ye sons of blood and rapine, be gone from me.

19. Be-

K

Impious

19 Because you say in thought: they shall receive thy cities in vain.

20. Did not I hate them, O Lord, who hated thee: and pined away because of thy enemies?

21. I hated them with a perfect hatred, and they are become enemies to me.

22. Prove me, O God, and know my heart; ask me, and know my ways.

23. And see if the way of iniquity be in me, and conduct me in the eternal way.

Impious wretches, ye said within yourselves; "in vain does the Lord put his people in possession of his cities."

Thou knowest, O my God, that I ever abhorred thy declared and determined enemies: and that I pined with grief in contemplating their excesses.

I have a consummate hatred of them: they are become my most inveterate enemies.

Put me O Lord to the proof; search all the foldings of my heart; examine me, judge all my proceedings.

See if perchance I have not strayed into the path of iniquity, conduct me into the right road and never suffer me to err therefrom.

COMMENT.

V. 1. The Lord does not "prove" man in order to attain to a knowledge of him, for the Lord

Lord knows every thing, says St. *Chrysostom*: even in its pre-existent state: the search or trial here spoken of therefore, is directed for man's instruction and information who is ignorant of his own self, his disposition and qualities, until the "Lord prove his sitting down and rising up" that is shews him, as it were, to himself in a variety of circumstances, and teaches him to draw self-knowledge from experience.

V. 2. "My path and my line." every minute incident of my life with all its various dependencies and connections, is accurately notic'd by you, The word "line" is in the Greek a "rush," or cord made of rushes. *χαίρος*. this term signifies also an instrument in use among the Egyptians in measuring the roads and highways. Pliny. l. 12. c. 14. so that "path and line" may be intended by the psalmist, to denote the same thing, by a repetition very common to Hebrew writers.

V. 3. Not only all my words are known to you, but even my thoughts as yet in embryo.

V. 4. The same kind of expression occurs in Job. c. x. v. 8. Thy hands have made me, and fashion'd me wholly round about."

V. 5. When I contemplate the structure of the human body; the curious intertexture of nerves, veins, arteries, tendons, bones, sinews, muscles and membranes, the variety, harmony and subserviency of all these and the other several parts of the composition: The use and dependance of the limbs; the grace and proportion of the lineaments; the wonders of the human form; infinite,

the nobleness and sublimity of the whole fabric, then O God thy knowledge and skill in raising it, is so "high I cannot reach it."

V. 6. 12. Here is a beautiful variety of expressions employ'd to describe the omni-presence of God; when we reflect on this divine presence, we may safely, in imitation of an ancient writer, bid the sinner go sin securely if he can find out a place where the eye of God does not behold him. Darkness may, indeed conceal him and his deeds from the sight of his fellow-creatures, but the divine presence, like that of the sun [D D] turns night into day, and makes all things manifest before God.

V. 13. 14. God made and therefore "possesses the reins" as his own property. The inference to be made from the expression of the Psalmist is perhaps this, that we should be ever upon our guard against even the most distant appearance of sin, and crush it, as it were, in its first formation by resisting and stifling the first suggestion to it, with the reflection, that God is intimately acquainted with the most secret affection and propensity of the heart of man.

V. 15. A metaphor is here us'd importing, that as plants and roots of flowers, &c are form'd under ground; so are human bones fashion'd under, or amidst the flesh and fibres: and the whole foetus matur'd for birth, whilst hidden in darkness; a circumstance which wou'd impede the operations of all but a divine Artificer.

V. 16.

[DD] Note xxvii.

V. 16. " My imperfect being" my body is form'd gradually, and it's make or fashion is delineated in your ideas, as in a book ; not one day passes in which it is not notic'd by you.

V. 18. " I rose up," seeing how your Saints are honour'd by you, and hoping to attain to like honour, I rouse from sin: I resolve to flee to you, and to " remain with thee."

V. 19. Murderers are here mention'd ; because they are most heinous sinners; and destroyers of that divine workmanship, in this psalm so much enlarg'd upon and extoll'd.

V. 20. Soon shall we recover the cities which the God of Israel has taken from us. " They shall receive thy cities in vain."

V. 21. The nature of the hatred here spoken of is well explain'd by *St. Austin*; we are not to hate our fellow-creatures on account of the vices they practice ; nor to love the vices for the sake of the persons who practice them.* We must not hate our neighbour, but only his sins : not what God made him but what he has made himself!

V. 23, 24. Holy David says in the beginning of the psalm, " O Lord thou hast proved me, and known me ;" and yet he concludes with a petition, that all his proceedings, and his very thoughts, may be still more scrutinized ! The conduct of the Prophet is just, and laudable says *St. Chrysostom*, for the Almighty put his friends and servants to the trial, for their welfare and spiritual improvement, every good Christian, there-

K 3

fore,

* Hec propter vitia Homines orderis;
Nec vitia propter Homines ames.

fore, will pray with fervour and sincerity to be thus tried and proved, in order to a more perfect purification from all sin: and from any sinful affection which may adhere to him.

Miserere mei Deus, psalm 50.

Title unto the end. When Nathan came to David after he had sinned with Bethsabee.

ARGUMENT.

THE subject of this renowned penitential psalm, is concisely pointed out in the words of the title. The example of the royal Penitent, robed in sack-cloth, crowned with ashes, deploring with heart-felt sorrow, his double crime of murder and adultery; and deprecating the divine anger, in terms such sorrow alone, could dictate, cannot be too greatly admired, nor too diligently copied by all those whose consciences plead guilty to any sin, or transgression present or past: that is to say, by all who confess they are sinners.

Translation.

1. **H**Ave mercy on me O God, according to thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of thy mercies, blot out my iniquity.

Interpretation.

O God have mercy on me: and oh may thy mercy be proportioned to the greatness of my crimes!

2. Wash

May

2. Wash me still more from my iniquity: and cleanse me from my sin.

3. Because I know my iniquity: and my sin is always against me.

4. I have sinned to thee only, and done evils before thee: that thou mayst be justified in thy words and overcome when thou art judged.

May thy infinite goodness incline thee to take compassion on me and to pardon my sins.

Forgive me, once more I pray, for, give me: if happily my foul crimes be effaced, yet will I not cease to beg that they may still be done away and I become still more pure in thy sight.

Thou knowest, O Lord, that I seek not to disguise my sins; but that I have it continually before my eyes, and incessantly reproach myself with it. Thou alone art witness of my crime; before thee alone did I commit it: but I confess it publicly that thou mayst verify in my person the promise thou hast made of granting pardon to every penitent sinner, and of putting to shame all who defyed thy word.

5. For

I have

5. For behold I was conceived in iniquity : and in sin my mother conceived me.

6. For behold thou hast loved truth : the uncertain and hidden things of thy wisdom thou hast manifested to me.

7. Thou wilt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed : thou wilt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8. Thou wilt give joy and gladness to my hearing : and the humbled bones shall rejoice.

I have sinned; O my God, I was conceived in sin; I was born with a propensity to sin!

Nevertheless my heart was not always corrupted by sin : for the time was, when my uprightness and simplicity were pleasing to thee ; so pleasing that thou delightest to communicate to me the most hidden mysteries of thy wisdom.

In order to restore me again to such favour, sprinkle me with the mystical hyssop ; cleanse the stains of my soul till it become purer and whiter than snow.

Speak to my heart, words of joy and comfort ; give me but to understand that thou art reconciled to with, and thou wilt add fresh vigour to all the powers of my soul.

Turn

9. Turn thy face from my sins ; and blot out all my iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart O God ; and renew in my bowels a right spirit.

11. Cast me not away from thy face : and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12. Render to me the joy of thy salvation ; and strengthen me with a sovereign spirit.

13. I will teach thy ways to the unjust ; and the impious shall be converted to thee.

14. deliver me from blood O God, the God of my salvation :
and

Turn away then thy face from my sins, so as never to behold them more : blot out my iniquity so effectually, that it may never appear again.

Renew in me that purity of heart, and that rectitude of intention with which I once walked in thy sight.

Restore me to that joy, which is the wonted pledge of thy favour.

And give me strength and courage to persevere in well-doing.

Then will I make known to sinners, how gracious are thy proceedings : and animated with a prospect of so great mercy, they will return to their duty.

O my God, in whom is centered my every hope, mitigate that horror

and my tongue shall extoll thy justice.

15. Open my lips O Lord; and my mouth shall declare thy praise.

16. For if thou wouldst have had sacrifice, verily I had given it; with holocausts thou wilt not be delighted.

17. An afflicted spirit is a sacrifice to God: a contrite and humble heart thou wilt not despise. O God.

18. Be favourable O Lord in thy good-will to Sion: that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.

19. Then thou wilt accept a Sacrifice of justice,

ror, with which I am agitated for having shed innocent blood; clear my guilt and I will sing to thee joyful hymns of thanksgiving.

Thus wilt thou have opened my lips, and my tongue shall break forth into thy praise.

If for the expiation of my crimes, thou hadst exacted legal sacrifices: I certainly had offered them, but knowing they would be little acceptable to thee.

And that the sorrow of a sinner, is his best holocaust; I bewail my sins without ceasing; the sighs of a contrite and humble heart thou wilt never reject.

Suffer not my sins to interrupt the course of thy mercy, to thy favoured city of Sion: enable us to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Then I shall hope that I have recovered favour

justice, oblations, and favour and justification
 holocausts : then they and that my offerings
 will lay calves on thy and holocausts will, on
 altar. this account, be accept-
 able to thee. Then also
 the people will join their
 sacrifices to mine, and
 heap their victims on
 thy Altar.

COMMENT.

V. 1, 2. The penitent king prays to be the object of a compleat and diversified mercy, extending not only to pardon of sins, but to the remission of the punishment due to them ; and to the grant of adequate contrition, entire satisfaction, efficacious purpose and final perseverance.

V. 3. David knew from infallible authority, viz. from the word of Nathan, God's minister and messenger, that the guilt of his sins was ' washed away,' but he begs to be still further cleansed from the dregs of sin ; and the consequences of evil inclinations, in this sense we may interpret John xiii, 10. " He that is washed, needeth not to wash his feet, but is clean wholly."

V. 4. Here is pointed out the usual consequence of true repentance, and the sinner's best plea for mercy.

V. 5. God alone knew the full extent and nature of his sin : and David as king was amenable to no other judge than God ; nor does it become

come any mortal to judge his fellow-creature for sin, unless by a delegated authority. "He that is without sin, let him sling the first stone." John viii. 7. With a true penitent, moreover, the thought of infinite goodness, supreme majesty, divine love, immense beauty, consummate perfection, by him offended, insulted, abused, will ever supersede and absorb all other considerations.

When the royal offender answered the expostulating Nathan with a peccavi, I have sinned! then was "God justified in his words," then did he "overcome when he judged."

V. 6. Holy David was born in honourable wedlock, of virtuous parents: he must be understood therefore of original sin, that great fountain of corruption, from which all other sins derive their streams; the infection of which is common to all mortals, "save only that he * who was conceived and born of a Virgin-Mother, was exempted, ~~and by a singular privilege, exempted her also, from the same taint.~~"

[EE]

V. 7. I do not alledge the corruption of my birth as an arrogant excuse, but only as an extenuating plea, and to excite mercy by a display of misery, neither do I plead ignorance, for thou hast favoured me with extraordinary knowledge of thy divine mysteries.

V. 8.

* In quo solo, & conceptus virginalis et Partus, sine ullo fuit mortalis originis Inquinamento. St. AMBROS.

[EE] Note xxviii.

V. 8. The prophet alludes to the ceremony of the law. Num. xviii. 19. which enacted that all unclean persons should be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop dipped in the "waters of separation." Levit. xiv. 6. This legal purification was but a type of the great propitiatory sacrament, sacrifice and indulgence of the new law. "How much more shall the blood of Jesus, --purge your consciences"? Heb. ix. 14. Washed and cleansed with this sacred blood, the guilty sinner, becomes pure as innocence, and "is made whiter than snow."

V. 9. 'Twas a subject of joy to David to be assured by the minister of God, that his sins were forgiven: but this very proof of mercy, was a fresh cause of anguish, as it convinced him more sensibly, how good was the God he had offended. 'Twas not 'till after he had exercised himself some time in repentance, that, "joy and gladness was fully given him."

V. 10. Not only "turn away thy face from my sins," which are written in thy great book of accounts, but "blot them all out" that so you may never again behold them.

V. 11. A great gift indeed is a pure heart; * which he alone has it in his power to bestow who "in the beginning created heaven and earth and all things therein" Gen. i. 1. "a right spirit" is that which tends directly towards God, without turning to the world.

L

V. 12.

* Grande autem munus, cordis esse mundi.

St. AMBROS.

V. 12. The most deplorable effect of sin is to "be cast away from God's face and abandoned by his spirit." the true penitent therefore dreads nothing more than a relapse into sin, which may plunge him into this irremediable misery. †

V. 13. The man according to God's own heart, must have experienced before his fall, the unspeakable "joy of salvation" and freedom from the tyranny of sin and lust. He here prays for a joyful restoration; and at the same time to be strengthened with a perfect (or princely) spirit, enabling him to live and act for the future as become the friend and favourite of God, the prophet, and the king.

V. 14. The contrite person resolves to exert his gratitude to God, in return for God's mercy towards him. He endeavours to reclaim the wicked from those paths, into which they had deviated, and perhaps thro' his sin and scandal. The example of so illustrious and sincere a penitent has operated to the conversion of many sinners, and will continue to do so, says St. *Ambrose*, as long as the great lessons inculcated in this admirable psalm shall be attended to.

V. 15. "Deliver me from blood." The humble criminal thought that the blood of Urias, whose death he had procured, was incessantly crying to Heaven for vengeance against him; nor is it surprising that a prince, whose characteristic was meekness and humanity, should be so much

† Fideliter timet auferre sibi,
Quam acceperat gratiam.

IDEM.

much alarmed at the cruel excess, into which his passion had hurried him. He supplicates therefore for mercy, and if he can but obtain it, he promises to exalt and publish to the world, the justifying grace of God, tho' at the same time he should be obliged to expose his own shame and iniquity.

V. 16. To praise God in a due manner is impossible, unless the Lord forgive our sins, and "open our lips." For to the sinner, God has said, why dost thou declare my justices, and take my covenant in thy mouth." ps. 49. 17. With great propriety therefore is the sixteenth verse of this fiftieth psalm prefixed by the church to her divine office. *Domine labie mea aperies &c.* [FF]

V. 17. In the days in which David lived, holocausts were ordained by God, and consequently were acceptable to his diving majesty: these verses may therefore be interpreted prophetically, as relating to the sacrifice of the new law, from which the Levitical sacrifices derived all their merit and efficacy.

V. 18. The psalmist asserts that the spiritual sacrifice of contrition and mortification, is far preferable in the sight of God to all the ancient legal victims.

V. 19. The pious king is apprehensive that the sins he had been guilty of, might be productive of public calamity, or at least prevent the intended blessings of God on his kingdom, and the city

K 2

of

of Jerusalem in particular. St. *Austin* and others believe that holy David was solicitous lest his sins should prevent the promised blessing of the Messiah, who was to descend from him, and to establish or "erect the walls of the new Jerusalem," viz, the church. 'Tis certain that sin is the cause of every evil, spiritual and temporal that afflicts the World. Every true penitent therefore, will, with ceaseless sighs, deplore the share his own sins have had in public and private calamities; and pray with unremitting fervour, that the past spiritual prejudices he may have occasioned, be compensated by future perseverant repentance and edification.

V. 20. This verse was literally accomplished when the city and temple of Jerusalem were finished, and God approved of the sacrifices offered up by king Solomon in consideration of the piety and zeal of his royal father; in a prophetic sense it is verified of the sacrifice daily offered up by the church militant on her altars.

NOTES

NOTES and ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note I. page vii. [A]

IT is observed by St. *Ambrose*, that in the five sacred books of scripture written by Moses, we meet with only two canticles, or poetical compositions; which, adds the saint, are incontestably most beautiful, and reflect a lustre on the whole body of his works, comparable to the splendor, with which the sun adorns the hemisphere. In the book of Judges, we find but one canticle, one only was composed by the prophet *Isaiah*. The prophets *Daniel* and *Habacuc*, wrote each of them but one. It was resolved by the royal Psalmist, continues the same holy Doctor, to excel universally in this sublime species of writing. He alone was eminently chosen by GOD to delight, instruct, and edify mankind with his divine hymns. And that admired excellence, those enchanting beauties of poetry, which flow occasionally, and as it were sparingly from the pens of other sacred writers, shine uniformly, and uninterruptedly thro' every part of the writings of the inspired David. The intelligent reader, will easily infer from the above remark of St. *Ambrose*, that whilst he reads the following commendatory strictures on the canticle of Moses, he at the same time peruses an eulogy of the psalms.

Monf. Herfan, ancient professor of rhetoric, in the college of Plessis at Paris, has shewn in a critical dissertation on this canticle, that it is the most eloquent composition antiquity can boast of. Tho' a professed admirer of the Heathen poets, and particularly of *Virgil* and *Horace*, whom he esteems as the most perfect models of poetic eloquence, yet he does not hesitate to pronounce

pronounce, that the most finished productions of those celebrated Romans, when compared with this hymn of Moses, are spiritless and inspired. \ This assertion however harsh it may appear to the advocates of profane, and strangers to sacred poetry, deserves to be received with a due deference to the probity and talents of the professor, and the industry, and fond attention, with which he studied and explained the works of the above mentioned two authors, for the space of several years: an impartial review of some passages from Virgil; v. g. from the third book of the *Æneid*, v. 16. to 39. Item *Æneid*, l. 8. v. 675, 728. And from Horace's 4th, and 15th Ode of the 4th Book; together with the last of his Epodes; a review I say, of the acknowledged fine lines contained in these references, contrasted with the beauties of the sacred poem, as pointed out by Mons. Herfan, must force conviction on the mind and judgement of every unprejudiced reader, of the vast superiority, (in even a prose translation) of the inspired Prophet, over the genuine native elegance, smooth harmony, and polished numbers of the Augustan Bards; or indeed of all the Bards, Rome or Athens ever saw.

Note II. p. viii. [B]

SHOULD the reader be desirous to know the opinions of the ancient Fathers, and writers of the Church, concerning the son of Syrach's final impenitence, they are here subjoined. That he died without true repentance, and consequently that he was eternally reprobated by the just judgement of God, is the apprehension of St. Gregory the great, St. Eucherius, St. Prosper, V. Bede, Theodoret, Pererius, Bellarmine, and others. The grounds of their fear, seems to be these: 1st, That in the bible, we frequently find recorded the repentance of those sinners, whose crimes are therein related; but no mention is made in scripture
of

of Solomon's conversion, though it particularizes his idolatry, and the rest of his transgressions. 2dly. That GOD in his justice, does usually abandon to obduracy of heart, and final impenitence, the perpetrators of such crimes, as are in their own natures very enormous, and in their consequences extensively destructive. Such were the deeds of Jeroboam, of which the scripture says, "He caused Israel to sin." And such it appears, were the crimes of Solomon. 3dly. That if Solomon had been a true convert, he would not have failed to erase all the temples and buildings erected by him for the worship of idols: but we know from 4 King. c. 23. That they were standing many years after his death, viz. in the reign of Josias. "The high places which were in Jerusalem, which Solomon had built to Astaroth, &c. the king destroyed." Lastly, that his royal father had told him in express terms, that if "he forsook GOD, he would be rejected by GOD for ever." 1 Paral. xxviii. 9.

In opposition to the above conjectures, the following holy Fathers and Doctors, *St. Jerom, St. Ambrose, St. Isidore, St. Epiphanius, St. Cyrill, St. Irenaeus* and others, express their confidence, that Solomon repented and was saved. Their opinion seems to rest on the arguments which follow. 1st. They quote from the septuagint sentences written by Solomon, which bespeak an humble Penitent. Ἀπορίστωλος γὰρ ἦμι &c. I am the most foolish of men. I have not learned wisdom, and have not known the science of saints, &c. Prov. xxiv. 32.--xxx. 22. 2dly. GOD speaking of Solomon, 2 Kings, c. vii. v. 14. says, "I will be to him as a father,--if he shall do any thing unjustly, I will rebuke him in the rod of men, but my mercy I will not take from him." 3dly. They observe that Solomon was buried with the Kings of Israel, a privilege, which they say, was never granted to any King dying without signs of repentance. 4thly. There is no instance

instance upon record, of any of the inspired Writers of sacred Scripture having been reprobated eternally.

Lastly, they observe, it is not to be supposed, that the prayers of the man, according to GOD's own heart, did not prevail for the salvation of a Son, of whom it is written, " GOD called his name amiable to our Lord, because our Lord loved him." 2 Kings xii. 25.

Note III. p. ix. [C]

THE letter referred to in the text, is esteemed as a genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity, relating to the times immediately succeeding the Apostles; it being written within forty years after the death of St. Paul. It is frequently appealed to by the early writers of the church, as a clear and unsuspicious evidence of the purity of the doctrines and manners of the primitive christians. But why the learned and elegant translator of this, and the rest of Pliny's letters, should add, that in regard of the prosecution of the christians herein spoken of, " the lenity and moderation, both of the Emperor and his minister, deserve to be applauded," is hard to conceive, let the minister, speak for himself: he declares, that if the christians did not deny their religion after a second or third interrogatory, he consigned them to immediate punishment, " whatever (however just or inoffensive) their opinions might be," and further owns, that he put two poor harmless families to dire torture, because they assisted the indigent and sick christians, and " were said," to administer in their religious functions,

This celebrated letter is quoted by one of the most extraordinary writers of the present age, and the utmost applause is given by him to the Roman governor, whom he distinguishes by the title of the humane Pliny. With what propriety this is done, the reader may

may judge from the instances of humanity just mentioned: But this eminent writer does not confine his praise and admiration to Trajan and Pliny: he speaks of the lenity and moderation of Dioclesian, Domitian, and other Roman emperors, but particularly of Nero, in the most laboured and enraptured strains: an opportunity will be taken in the sequel of these notes, to speak more at large of this author's history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire. It will be sufficient for the present purpose, to shew from his own words, how far he has succeeded in "demonstrating the indulgent spirit of Rome and Polytheism," in regard of the primitive martyrs. "Their humane judges, endeavoured to reclaim, rather than to punish those *deluded Enthusiasts*---p. 544. "If persuasions proved ineffectual; the scourge and the rack were called in, to supply the deficiency of arguments, and every art of cruelty was employed (by these humane judges) to subdue such inflexible obstinacy: p. 544. After conviction, they still retained in their own power the alternative of life or death; an easy pardon was granted to repentance, and if they consented to cast a few *grains of incense upon the Altar*, they were dismissed from the tribunal with safety and *applause*. p. 543. But it seems, "the judges contented themselves for the most part, with the milder chastisement of imprisonment, exile or slavery in the mines, p. 554," say the Martyrs "were permitted, by the negligence of their keepers freely to profess their religion in the midst of those dreary habitations, 583." After all "the transient persecutions served only to revive the zeal, and restore the discipline of the faithful, 555. And "the moments of extraordinary rigour were compensated by much longer intervals of peace and security," 555." moreover, in one persecution there suffered about fifteen hundred, "which number if it is equally divided between the ten years persecution, will allow an *annual consumption* of 150 Martyrs."

Martyrs." Is this the expression of a candid, polished Historian? of an unbiassed advocate for the indulgent spirit of Rome and Polytheism? does not the above indecent phrase, and his every other assertion in regard of the primitive Martyrs, "betray by its dark colouring and distorted features, the pencil of an enemy?"

Note IV. p. ix. [D]

IN proof of the astonishing fervour with which all ranks of christians attended divine service in the early periods of the church, may be cited St. *Jerom's* letter to *Læta*. Herein he advises that lady to choose a governess for her daughter (just then emerging from childhood) of approved and strict piety, who might initiate her tender ward by precept and example, in all the most rigorous observances; inuring her to rise regularly to midnight prayers and psalms; to usher in each morning with devout hymns; to take up again her spiritual arms, like a true christian warrior, at the third, sixth and ninth hours; and finally to close her exercise at night with an examen and thanksgiving; an instance this of severe counsel, which must, it is to be feared, greatly shock the growing delicacy, and refinement of modern religion. * St. *Austin* however in some of his sermons, gave advice to his hearers, which to a modern congregation might appear more extravagantly devout than even St. *Jerom's* private instructions to *Læta*. "If real infirmities do not forbid it, fast every day, and rise diligently to prayer every night," ferm. 56. de Tem. "Let every one, if they can possibly, † repair to church in the night and there implore

* Illam doceat & assuescat suo exemplo ad orationes et psalmos, nocte conlurgere, mane hymnos canere; Tertia sexta, nona, stare in acie quasi bellatricem Christi, accensaque lucernula, reddere sacrificium vespertinum. Epif. ad Læt.

† Vepiat ergo cuicunq; possibile est, &c.

plore GOD to pardon their sins." *serm. 251.* Though such language would sound extraordinary to an audience in these latter days it is certain, that it was both familiar and acceptable to the generality of christians in former times of piety and servour. If the reader entertain any doubt concerning the nature and extent of this assertion, let him consult the works of *St. Chrysostom*, *Hom. 42. ad Pop. antioch.* of *St. Ambrose* on psalm 118, of *Clem. Alex. Pædag. c. 9.* *Tertul. in Apol. circa finem.* *Hilary* in psalm 118. *Cassian l. 2. &c. &c.* and he will be both convinced and edified.

Note V. p. xi. [E]

THE import of the word Breviary, taken in the latter sense mentioned in the text, if rightly attended to, would convey a hint to all who use that book, of the propriety of their being well versed in the knowledge of all the sacred scriptures, and well acquainted with the lives of the Saints, and with the writings of the holy Fathers, and Doctors of the Church : but more especially, it would shew the necessity of joining to knowledge, a spirit of piety and devotion, in order to enable them to recite the psalms, and other prayers, which the Divine office includes, to any advantage. Were all persons concerned, thus qualified and disposed for the performance of their duty, it would prevent their entertaining disparaging ideas of the importance of their daily function. No one would be heard to lament, that his age or infirmities, or any other accidental circumstances, had rendered him, "fit for nothing but to say his Breviary." happy he, thrice happy the man who in the best sense of the word, is fit for so august an employment ! If truly fit for that, he is fit for great things indeed ! He is fit to be mediator between GOD and man ; to be the deputy of mankind, to "consult the Lord in their name." *Mat. xx, 12.* to be their perpetual advocate, always ready
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to plead their cause, and to improve the enviable privilege he enjoys, of being so often called to an audience with the divine majesty, to the benefit of himself and others. He is fit to be appointed guardian of the church throughout christendom, sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum. 1 Cor. xi. 28. his pretended unimportant task of reciting the Breviary, is in fact, the principal function of an Apostle, and takes place of the "ministry of the word," and other the most splendid duties of the apostolic charge, *Nos orationi et ministerio Verbi*. By saying his Breviary he "acts the better part," and tho' seemingly in repose at the feet of his Saviour, he fails not to assist his brethren, labouring in the vineyard of the Lord; and will one time receive, perhaps, as great, or greater recompence, than they who have been much more active through life than he, and have born the "weight and heat of the day." By saying his Breviary he is fitted to combat for the Lord, and incline victory to the armies of the most High; to lift up his heart and hands, like another Moses, towards Heaven, and by his unrelenting fervour, prevent the enemies of God and his Church from gaining ground. *Exod. xvii. 11*. By saying his Breviary, he consults and expedites the safety and welfare, not only of the Church, but of the State also. "The battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift;" and the great Arbiter of human events, may incline their success oftener to the prayers of the humble, than to the wisdom of Kings, and abilities of Ministers. In fine, by saying his Breviary, he is fitted for a still infinitely more exalted employment, than even the care of Church and State: for he is fit to rank with Angels, and the highest Host of Heaven, whose dignity consists in being privileged to stand before the throne of God, and recite his praise. *Luke xix. Toby. xii. 15*.

Note VI. p. xi. [F]

THIS not to be doubted but that a well dispos'd mind however totally uninform'd of the excellencies and merits of the psalms may yet derive very great spiritual advantage and improvement from a devout recital of them, even as they stand in the vesper and other prayer books; for to say nothing of the benefit accruing from the very intention of praising a God in whose service our most silent wishes are rewarded; 'tis almost impossible to peruse many psalms, or rather, many verses of a psalm without meeting some sentence of piety and subject of reflection, which none can plead they have not a head to comprehend, if they have but a heart to feel: let the first verse of the 69th psalm be brought as one instance out of a thousand, "O GOD look down upon my aid; Lord, make haste to assist me;" this short sentence, says a holy Abbot, mention'd by Cassian, contains a prayer to GOD in "time of danger; an humble sense of our own insufficiency; a solicitude and constant fear of offending; an acknowledgement of our own weaknets, a confidence of divine succour; a fervent charity, and apprehension of the Inares of our enemies, from whose repeated assaults we cannot be secured but by the assistance of the Almighty" Collat. x. c. 10.* a like matter of fruitful consideration occurs continually throughout the Psalter, wou'd it not therefore be very adviseable for a devout christian unskill'd in the mystical, allegorical, historical and even literal sense of an entire psalm to select some one or more instructive verse or sentence, as they occur, to dwell upon and nourish his piety therewith; instead of spending his time and attention in endeavouring to keep up with the Choir or Priest at the altar; and of distracting himself with the

* Habet ille versiculus, adversus discrimina invocationem Dei; habet humilitatem piæ confessionis; habet sollicitudinis ac timoris perpetui vigilantiam, habet considerationem fragilitatis sue---constitetur se non posse sine sui Defensoris auxilio librari.

care of references to the different parts of the Office-Book, and a variety of turnings and counter turnings; or finally, instead of disturbing his neighbour's devotion by grating their ears with his harsh discordant tone, or with a pronunciation of latin words, to the very orthography of which, he is a stranger.

Note VII. p. 1. [G]

ALL Interpreters seem to agree that the titles of the psalms were not prefix'd by David, most probably Esdras gave the titles which are set before the Hebrew; and the authors of the Septuagint those which we read at the head of the Greek psalms; St. *Jerom* has translated both the Hebrew and Greek titles into latin. Tho' it cannot be satisfactorily prov'd that David was the author of every one of the 150 psalms of which the psalter is compos'd, 'tis very certain at least that he compos'd a greater number than those which bear his name, to bring two instances only out of many that might be brought; the second, and ninety-fourth psalms have no title, yet 'tis clear from Acts iv. 25. and Heb. iv. 7. that David compos'd them both. The meaning therefore of the title "Psalm to David," *psalm David* is not barely, that he compos'd it; but rather that the subject-matter was communicated to him by inspirations. JANSEN.

Note VIII. p. 7. [H]

THE 104th psalm is the first to which the title Allelujah is prefix'd by the Septuagint: it is generally understood to signify "praise the Lord." but as the Douay Bible observes more is signified by the two Hebrew words Allelujah than praise ye the Lord." And so much energy is found in this term, that St. *Jerom*, and indeed the whole church has thought proper to retain it in the psalms, and where-ever it occurs in the Bible, without translating it either into Greek or latin for fear perhaps of impairing its genius and softness. Allelujah being adapted to joyful solemnities: Tob. xiii. 12. Apocal. xix. 1. 4. The fourth council of Toledo

Toledo has prohibited the use of it in time of lent and other days of fasting, and in the mass and office for the dead. 'Tho' St. *Jerom* makes mention that in his time 'twas sung in the obsequies of the dead; for speaking of the funeral of *Fabiola* he describes the solemn sound of Allelujah in this full and harmonious period, viz. *Sonabant psalmi et aurata tecta templorum, reboans in sublime qua tiebat Alleluiah.*

Note IX. p. 7 [1]

THE Editors of the Douay Bible in their proemial annotations to the psalms, recommend to their readers several observations as keys wherewith to unlock the treasures of divine wisdom contain'd in those inspir'd hymns. An observation made by St. *Gregory* on the sacred writings in general, is peculiarly applicable to the psalms, and may serve as a master-key on this occasion. "The holy scripture (among many other incomparable excellencies) surpasseth all other doctrines in the very mannner of speaking, because by one and the same speech, it reporteth the thing done and proclaimeth a mystery." Now the psalms, universally, proclaim a mystery and with the very same terms which relate past events, they foretel events to come. 'Tis this property of the psalms which constitutes their double sense, so unanimously attributed to them by all the holy Fathers and interpreters,† and which they stile, the one, literal and historical, the other mystical and prophetical. If the reader do not attend diligently to this distinction, all the beauty and excellency of the Psalms will be lost to him, and they will become uninstruative and insipid, if not even utterly unintelligible, what, will he say to himself, have I to do with David, who died so many centuries ago; or with the ark and the temple which so long since, have been no more? or with Jerusalem and Babylon, Egyptians and Philistines, nations and places existing

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† Non est ambigendum ea quæ in psalmis dicta sunt, secundum evangelicam predicationem intelligi oportere, St. *HILAR.* *præf. in psal.*

GOD knows where, or with the law and the sacrifices, the blood of goats and oxen, ceremonies long since abolished or confined to Jews and Heathens? But if, when he reads of all these things and persons, he reflects on their typical and evangelical meaning; if he substitute* for example's sake, Jesus Christ, for the Prophet David; the gospel, for the law; the church, for Jerusalem; the enemies of the church, for Babylonians and Philistines; the sacrifice of the new testament for those of the old, &c. &c. then the meaning of the psalms becomes not less evident than exalted, and opens to his view in their full beauty and majesty. He perceives the two senses very distinct from each other yet conspiring in perfect harmony, and bearing a wonderful resemblance in every feature; while the analogy between them is so exactly preserv'd, that either may pass for the original, from whence the other was copied. What he reads, for instance, of the splendor and magnificence of Jerusalem, he finds to correspond perfectly to the real state of that Jewish City; and discovers it to be at the same time most eminently true of the glory and grandeur of the City of God, the heavenly Zion: thus again, what he sees related concerning the slavery and misery of Israelites residing in Babylon, he feels to be sadly applicable to christians living in Babylon's great antitype the world! if the reader proceed in like manner thro' the entire psalter, he will discern, that by a proper use of the distinction and double sense here exemplified, a new light is thrown on almost every expression, and of

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* Ergo erige Aures Christiane lector & ubi tatia in Davide legeris Tu mihi fac cogitas, non aream fragile lignum, aut Tabernaculum Constructum pellibus, non urbem lapidibus compositis: non Templum divinae majestati augustum; sed Christi et Ecclesiae sacramenta; sed vivos lapides, Christo unguari lapidi coaptatos, sed ipsam Eucharistiam presentis Dei testem; denique celeste regnum & aeternam felicitatem. --- iterum atque iterum erigamus animos atque ubi Davidem, ubi Davidis Hostes Saulen, Achitophelen, --- audimus, cum animo infigamus Christum & Ecclesiam laboribus periculisque exercitam, &c. Bossuet, dissert. de psal. c. i. ad fin.

a fresh weight and dignity added to every sentiment ; he will not fail to admire and adore the wisdom of God conveying to him instruction and edification, in a method so pleasing and inimitable as that of the Psalms.

Note X. p. 10. [K]

THE ancient fathers and doctors of the church were endued with such talents of the mind, and virtues of the heart, as must qualify them in the eyes of every dispassionate judge acquainted with their characters, to be unexceptionable evidences of the truth of the doctrine mentioned in the text. It must be a comfort to every member of the Catholic church, to reflect, that he is supported in the belief of all the articles of his faith, by the united testimonies of men renowned through the world for the greatness of their learning and the sanctity of their lives. How is the mind impressed to the disadvantage of all Heresiarchs upon consideration, that they all of them modelled their several systems and creeds, in direct contradiction to the judgements and sentences of these bright luminaries of the church, and ornaments of human nature. It was the boast of the noted Martin Luther in his defection from the primitive faith, and revolt from the Catholic church, that he stood alone ! so opposite were the notions he broached, to the clear and acknowledged belief of all antiquity, that in despair of a single authority of credit to countenance his novelties, he proudly vaunted that " he stood alone ! " sensible that the holy fathers and doctors of the church were a constellation of witnesses to the ancient truth, too resplendent, for the false glare of his new-fangled opinions, he set himself to tarnish the lustre of their evidence, by vomiting forth against them the foulest scurrilities and blackest slanders. His immediate followers, and humble imitators took up the intemperate strain of his abuse, and have continued it in a greater or less degree to this day. To say nothing of the

studied inveclives of the Barbeyracs, and the contemptuous treatment of the Middletons and very many others, even the most moderate among the Heterodox writers, have been uniformly addicted to censure and reproach the fathers. Nor is this their conduct and unanimity at all surprizing: men who are bent upon assaulting the church, are naturally led to attack her first and chiefest Guards and Champions.

Note xi. p. 11. [L]

FROM the sentiments and principles conspicuous in the close of a work published two or three years since in London, it may be concluded that the author, a gentleman of very great abilities and extensive erudition, holds the first rank among the free-thinkers of the age. He seems to have devoted his whole life to the study of literature, (see his Juvenile performance published, 1761. *essai sur l'étude de la littérature*;) and has, perhaps, directed the whole fruits of his studies to one favourite point, viz, the impugning and undermining the christian religion. How far, thus well qualified, and heartily disposed, he has succeeded; or whether the keenest efforts of this penetrating genius have wounded christianity otherwise than through the side of truth, many writers have attempted to shew. They, all collectively, maintain, that the work in question abounds in shame, plagiarism, erroneous quotations, mutilated extracts, forced constructions, false inferency, inadmissible conjectures, and fancied descriptions. That it is stained with ungenerous and indecent irony, with oblique and unmanly insinuations, nay, with rancorous malice in almost every page. That it carries on the face of it, a hatred and aversion of the primitive Christians and Martyrs, and shews a spleen against the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church, no less malignant. One of his examiners and critics, expresses himself in the following words. "Sceptics and Free-thinkers are of a date so old, and their objections were urged so early

early; and in such numbers, that our modern pretenders to this wisdom and philosophy, can with difficulty invent any thing new, or discover with all their malevolent penetration a fresh flaw. The proofs of plagiarisin which I have produced, as undeniable as they are numerous, the world will be surpris'd to meet with in an author who puts in so bold a claim to originality and extensive reading. *Middleton*, could afford some topics of abuse; *Barbeyrac*, had others ready prepared, for his purpose; and *Dodwel* in one dissertation, had collected erudition enough to furnish the far greater part of the materials for his sixteenth chapter. And I think I may boldly assert, that if I had added *Mosheim's* Ecclesiastical History, and *Dupin's* Bibliotheque to my list of Mr. G--'s modern friends, I should hardly have left him a single sentence of his own to boast of in his two famous chapters, which were to give the death-wound to Christianity." "Many a sincere, but, I must add, ill instructed Christian, impos'd upon by our Historians parade of quotation and elegance of composition, have done him what, I must think, the unmerited honour of considering him as an adversary, who had produced something of importance, unknown to his predecessors in the cause of infidelity, and which the friends of the Gospel would find it difficult to confute. Be it observed therefore, that Mr. G--. does not give himself the trouble of starting any new objection against the truth of Christianity, but that his whole plan of "accounting for its progress from secondary causes," is a stale infidel topic, urged and confuted long before he was born."

Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,

----- laudum in mensa cupido?

"The kingdom of God does not consist in elegance of speech, but in innocence of life and good works.--- Woe be to those men who give themselves up to the unprofitable curiosities of human wisdom---the time draws on apace, when their master Christ shall come with his Angels, to hear their lessons, &c."

THO. à KEMPIS, b. iii. c. 43.

After

After the above was written, an opportunity offered of perusing a pamphlet, entitled, a Vindication of some Passages in the 15th, and 16th, Chapters of the History, &c. It is published in answer to the charges spoken of in this note. The Author in his fifteenth Chapter has most lamentably observed, that 'tis "a melancholy duty imposed upon the Historian, to discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption, which religion contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings." And it should seem that in his account of the obstinacy and sedition of the primitive Martyrs; of the credulity, folly, uncharitableness, and other vices of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church; and of the spiritual pride and licentious manners of the confessors; the remembrance of this melancholy duty, did incessantly "obtrude itself on his reluctant mind." Be this as it will, his zealous adherence to this historical principle, and the manner in which he has conducted work in consequence thereto, very soon attracted the notice of several learned Ministers of the church of England. This notice if he did not invite, he at least expected: for in his vindication he tells us, that when he delivered to the world the first volume of an important history he could not be ignorant that the result of his enquiries might offend the interest and opinions of some: "If the whole work was favourably received by the public, I had the more reason to expect that it would provoke the zeal of those who consider themselves as the *watchmen of the holy city*. These expectations were not disappointed, and a fruitful crop of answers, apologies, examinations, remarks, &c. sprung up with all convenient speed." p. 3. From among the number of his antagonists the author singles out three reverend divines of the University of Oxford, whom he in his turn attacks with an eagerness and warmth, scarcely consistent with his own professed regard to the strictest decency, and politeness of style and manners. He describes two of them, whom he calls
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the confederate Doctors, as staid and sturdy Polemics, armed with rustic cudgels; enlisted in the service of authority; wearing the uniform of the regiment; oppressed with the same yoke, covered with the same trappings; heavily moving along in the same beaten track of prejudice and preëminent. He acquaints the other, that there is an insuperable bar of separation between them, (the Divine and the Historian,) viz. the difference of language and manners; That he can acknowledge with pleasure, the religion of the Divine appeared to be very different from his own; that he smiles upon him (the Divine) with some contempt but without the least mixture of anger or resentment. That the Divine is distinguishable by a dialect, the most congenial to his temper and inclination, the most familiar to the company in which he has lived, and to the authors with whom he is conversant; even as an animal is distinguishable by the note, or cry, or howl, which is peculiar to its species. After many similar flourishes he declares: "my readers must be satisfied, and indeed satisfied with the repeated proofs which I have made, of the weight and temper of my adversaries weapons. They have in every assault fallen dead and lifeless to the ground. They have more than once recoiled, and dangerously wounded, the unskillful hand that had presumed to use them." Towards the end of his vindication he says; "I cannot derive any triumph or consolation from the occasional advantages, which I may have gained over three adversaries, whom it is impossible for me to consider as objects either of terror or esteem.---I am impatient to discontinue for ever this odious controversy, with the success of which I cannot surely be elated." To judge aright of the success here mentioned, the reader of the Vindication may be assisted by an observation which the Vindicator himself suggests: "It is a clear and fundamental principle of historical, as well as legal criticism, that whenever we are destitute of the means of comparing the testimonies of the opposite parties, the evidence of any witness, however illustrious by his rank

rank and titles, is justly to be suspected." p. 123. "It is the duty of an impartial judge, to be council for the prisoner, who is incapable of making any defence for himself: and it is the first office of a council to examine with distrust and suspicion, the interested evidence of the accuser." p. 125. There seems no impropriety in adding to this observation, that one of the historian's antagonists has imputed to him, "the crime of betraying the confidence and seducing the faith of those readers, who may heedlessly stray in the flowery paths of his diction, without perceiving the poisonous snake that lurks concealed in the grass." And another of his critics has said, "the very agreeable entertainment which our author has set before us, is unhappily intermixed with a subtle poison of the most dangerous tendency." "The deadly draught is offered in a golden cup, curiously wrought, and of a most dazzling polish." One observation more taken from the historian himself, might be rendered serviceable to some of his readers; "on public occasions, the philosophers affected to treat with respect the religion of their country; but their secret contempt penetrated through their rank and awkward disguise, and even the people, when they discovered that it was rejected and derided, by those whose rank or understanding they were accustomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehensions concerning the truth of those doctrines to which they had yielded the most implicit belief." Hist. c. xxv. p. 504.

In the postscript to his vindication, the Historian takes notice of a few remarks, &c. published in the course of the last summer. The pamphlet appears to have been written by a Roman Catholic gentleman, who has chosen to spend in an honourable employment, some of those many hours, which others of his rank and condition, too often waste in frivolous, or even less pardonable, amusements. By way of reply to these remarks, the Historian of the Roman empire insinuates, that the author of them is not a gentleman; that

that he has neither a liberal mind, nor liberal manners; that he has no wit nor reason; that he lies sunk in an unfathomable gulph of prejudice and superstition; that in the full light and freedom of the eighteenth century his mind is involved in a mist, &c. The polite historian, seems to have been urged to these reflections, partly by this offensive circumstance, viz. The pamphlet was anonymous. It would be presumption in me, to pretend to ascertain the precise reasons the writer might have for not committing his name to the press: but I may venture to ask, why in a free and Christian country, an advocate for the Christian religion, may not have the liberty of publishing, or concealing his name, at his option. The historian himself, when without provocation, and without tenderness, he attacked the same religion, thought himself entitled to the same privilege. But he wrote for fame; fame is the motive, it is the reward of our labours;" and therefore very rationally, he published to the world, his name, together with his writings. The gentleman who has offered to the public, some remarks on what the historian has written, may not perhaps have experienced a like ardour for the acquisition of fame, by a display of his literary abilities, and may have therefore judged it unnecessary to shew any desire of attracting the public attention. To vindicate Christianity from insidious obliquy and aspersions, seems to have been the principal object of his remarks; and the success or attainment of that object, depended on their intrinsic nature. How this could be any wise affected, or altered, by the prefixing, or not prefixing his name to them, is inconceivable. It certainly could not add to their justness, nor take off from their impropriety; it could neither demonstrate their strength, nor disguise their weakness. Hence the grievous offence, which the pamphlet has given, does not appear to have originated solely from its being anonymous. Neither does it appear that the historian was displeased to find, that any other than theological champions had dared to wield a lance against a pagan adversary. Nor can he be supposed to
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feel, even a transient uneasiness, on discovering that a man of learning and piety had contradicted, in one instance at least, his favourite assertion, viz. that "a latent and involuntary scepticism, adheres to the most pious dispositions of the present age. From personal reflections, the historian passes to general censures on the religion of his opponent; to which, perhaps, a general answer may suffice. "The Roman Catholic Religion, inculcates a style of mortification, of abasement, of self-contempt, and is therefore ill calculated to obtain the suffrage of those philosophers, who in the conduct of this transitory life, consult only the feelings of nature.

Note XII. p. 16. [M]

AN excellent French writer, has a remark pertinent to the subject mentioned in the text, the energy and antitheses of which would, probably, be lost in my translation. *Les grands se piquent d'ouvrir une allée dans un forêt, de soutenir des terres par de longues murailles; de dorer des plafonds; de faire venir dix pouces d'eau; de meubler une orangerie: mais de rendre un cœur content, de combler une âme de joie; de prévenir d'extrêmes besoins ou d'y remédier leur curiosité ne s'étend point jusqu'à la.* La Bruyere. It is a matter of some surprise, as well as pity, that several among those individuals, who are guilty of the moral deviations and omissions hinted at in the reference to this note, should be in other respects so conscientiously, and religiously disposed, as to startle at the commission of what they think a grievous fault: little reflecting, that their habitual conduct, though it alarm them less, does endanger more their eternal wellfare, than a casual consent to more heinous and disgracing crimes.

Note XIII. p. 18. [N]

WHOEVER wishes to excel in the knowledge and practice of religion, should make the lives and writings

writings of the Holy Fathers, the object of his imitation and esteem. By having these constantly in view, his mind, will acquire by degrees, a happy bias, and he will find his affections carried insensibly, yet powerfully, towards that virtue and wisdom of which they exhibit such shining examples. It is impossible, perhaps to become intimately acquainted with all they have written, considering the number and extent of their works, the shortness of human life and its necessary avocations. I may venture however to assure my reader, that he has it in his power, by using very moderate industry and diligence, to attain to a very competent knowledge of all the writings, of every one of the Fathers, from St. *Ignatius* the Martyr, down to St. *Bernard*, who are generally reckoned the first and last, as to date, upon that venerable list: by a competent knowledge, I understand, a concise and judicious account of their several lives and actions; a knowledge of the times in which they wrote, the chief subjects they have treated, their different manner of treating them, their style, their method of reasoning, their various excellencies of eloquence, erudition and piety: all this and more, may be compassed by a steady perusal of a work, published about the middle of this century at Paris, entitled *Bibliothèque Portative des peres de l'Eglise*.

The author of certain pretended translated letters, professes to have derived all his learning from the writings of the Fathers in general, but particularly from those of St. *Auslin*. Some persons, considering, perhaps, the kind of erudition exhibited in those famous letters, will be tempted to suppose, that the author has certainly mistaken the name of the source, from whence his learning flows; whilst other persons will easily conceive, that he must have drawn it from the best and wisest models, and even, improved upon his originals. The singularly agreeable, novel and enchanting manner, in which as they think, virtue and religion are depicted and enculcated throughout those letters, is to them, a

proof of the justness of their opinion. The limits I have prescribed myself, will not admit of a discussion of the arguments, which the defenders and impugnors of that work advance, to invalidate each others judgements. There seems however, no impropriety in mentioning, that the originality of the letters is no longer problematical; and that they are generally understood by all well-informed readers, to be a literary forgery. Whence there is reason to conclude, that the ostensible name of Ganganelli, is made use of by the translator, for certain suspicious, and insidious purposes. A sober, unbiassed, and attentive survey of the sentiments and documents (interwoven with an amusing variety of dissertation,) which the letters contain, would perhaps lead to a discovery of what those purposes are. Be this as it will, such partial and impassioned readers, (for such, I have heard, there are) as maintain, that the inditer of these epistles, whoever he be, has furnished the world with a code of spiritual instruction, and religious exhortation, never yet equalled, are most egregiously mistaken: if they were not the dupes of their own imagination, they would never have recourse to those motley essays, merely for piety and edification's sake, whilst they had it in their power to read such books as the following, viz. *The Imitation of Christ*; *the Introduction to a Devout Life*; *the Christian's Directory*; *the Sinner's Guide*; *Manning's Moral Entertainments*; *B.C.'s Meditations*, &c. &c. &c.

Note XIV. p. 19. [O]

EVERY reader of taste, will be pleased with the beautiful strain of poetry, that runs through this 113th p. m. The most lively fancy, the most solid judgement, and the most sublime genius, may meet in numberless parts of the psalter, with what will satisfy their highest expectations, and gratify their warmest wishes: at the same time, the most serious and religious tempers, may discover all the affecting sentiments

ments of piety, and enlightened devotion that they can desire. If the reader would be thoroughly convinced of the truth of what is here said, let him but consult the treatise of the excellent and learned Bishop of Meaux on the psalms; and in particular the 2d. chapter of his preface, inscribed, *De Grandiloquentiâ & Suavitate Psalmorum*. After such a perusal, he will receive no bad impression from the insinuation, of a late noble letter-writer, that "his ideas of devotion and dullness, were so blended together, as scarce to be separated." Indeed, the man who could labour to instill into the tender mind of his own son, rules of conduct and maxims, which none but abandoned profligates can reflect on without shame, must have entertained strange ideas of devotion; such a subject should not have been characterised by the author of a work, "calculated to poison the human mind, with every bad and detestable principle, that can destroy the duties of a citizen, and blast the virtues of private life." *

The mean despicable system of studied hypocrisy, the methodised art and plan of seduction and adultery, which are recommended, repeated, and inculcated in some of this Nobleman's Letters, with all the force and energy, which his Lordship's wit and talents, and age and experience, and above all, which his parental persuasion, example and authority could give; these passages are such shocking deformities, as cannot possibly be effaced, or compensated by any imaginable graces and excellencies, to be found in any, or all the other parts of his correspondence. See on this subject, the judicious criticism of an elegant female writer.

Chapone's Miscel. p. 13. &c.

Note XV. p. 24. [P]

THUCYDIDES speaks of the custom of the Greeks, mentioned in the comment; l. 1. In Oræbe Archid. as does also Zenophon in Symp. and other Greek writers; neither was this practise confined to

N 2

Greece.

* Royal Register.

Greece. The Egyptians, if we may believe Herodotus, l. 2. stiled all people barbarians, who did not belong to the territory of Egypt. Ovid lamented in his exile, that he was looked upon as a Barbarian, by the rude and uncivilized people of Wallachia.

Barbarus hic Ego, quia non intelligorulli.

Derident stolidi verba latina Getae.

Trif. l. 5. El. 11.

Note XVI. p. 25. [Q]

THE Red Sea, called by the antients, Sinus Arabicus, and now Gulfo de Mecca, is that part of the southern sea, which interposes itself between Egypt on the west, Arabia Felix, and some part of Arabia Petrea on the east, while the northern-bounds of it touch upon Idumæa, or the coast of Edom. Edom in the Hebrew tongue, signifies red, and was the Epithet given Esau, for selling his birth right for a mess of pottage. This country which his posterity possessed, was called after his name, as was also the sea, which adjoined to it; but the Greeks not understanding the reason of the application, translated it into their own tongue, and called it, *ερυθρά θάλασση*: thence the Latins, *mare rubrum* and we, the Red Sea. The Arabs at this day name it Buhr-el Chalzem, i. e. the sea of Clysona, from a town situated on its western coast, much about the place where the Israelites passed over from the Egyptian to the Arabian shore. But as the word Clysona, may denote a drowning, or overflowing with water, it is not improbable, that the town built in this place, as well as this part of the sea, might have such a name given it in memory of the fate of the Egyptians, who were drowned herein, (Wells's Geog. old Test. v. 11.) The passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, is one of the most remarkable events in the whole Jewish history; the Lord having opened this sea, and dried it up so thoroughly, that no less than six hundred thousand effective men, besides women, children and aged men, passed it over dry.

dry-shod. Josephus the historian asserts that this extraordinary event, ought not to be look'd upon as naturally impossible since the Israelites might have passed thro' the waters, in the same manner, as a long time afterwards, Alexander and his Macedonians pass'd thro' the sea of Pamphylia. But the historians that have mentioned this passage of the Macedonians, assure us, that they enter'd into the sea and coasted the shore where it was not deep; so that the soldiers marched all day in the water, which was not above their middle. It is thought the place where the Hebrews passed the Red Sea, is two or three leagues below its northern point, at the place call'd Kolsun, or Chysma, some of the ancients have testified, that in their time, might still be seen the ruins of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots. See Calmet's dissertation on this subject.

Note XVII. p, 26. [R]

THE poetic version of the eight first verses of the 113th psalm, beginning thus "When Israel freed from Pharaoh's hand," &c. and published in the Spect. No. 461, is excellent and well-known: in the place of this, therefore, I crave leave to insert a beautiful paraphrase of the 148th Psalm, which, probably few of my readers have met with. It is said to have been written by an eminent Physician; no learned reader need be told that the Physicians of Great Britain have distinguished themselves from those of all other countries, not only by eminence in their profession, but by the excellency of their productions in every branch of literature.

148th Psalm translated by Lord
CARRYL.

Praise the Lord
all you that are
in Heaven.

148th Psalm Paraphrased.

Begin my soul th' exalted lay,
Let each enraptur'd thought obey,
And praise th' Almighty's name.
Lo! Heaven and Earth, and seas and skies
In one melodious concert rise,
To swell th' inspiring theme.

Praise

Ye.

Praise him in
the high places.

Ye fields of light, celestial plains
Where gay-transporting beauty reigns,
Ye scenes divinely fair
Your maker's wond'rous power proclaim,
Tell how he form'd your shining frame
And breath'd the fluid air.

Praise him all
his Angels; praise
him all his hea-
venly Host.

Ye Angels catch the thrilling sound,
While all the adoring thrones around
His boundless mercy sing;
Let ev'ry list'ning Saint above
Wake all the tuneful soul of love
And touch the sweetest string.

Sun and moon
praise him; stars
and light, join all
to praise him.

Join ye loud spheres, the vocal choir;
Thou, dazzling orb of liquid fire,
The mighty chorus aid:
Soon as grey evening gilds the plain,
Thou, moon, protract the melting strain,
And praise him in the shade.

Praise him the
Heaven of Hea-
vens, and let all
the waters above
the heavens praise
the name of the
Lord; for he
speak and they
were made; he
commanded and
they were created.

Thou Heav'n of Heav'ns, his vast abode;
Ye clouds proclaim your forming God
Who call'd yon worlds from night;
"Ye shades, dispel!"---th' Eternal said,
At once the involving darkness fled
And nature sprang to light.

Praise our Lord
all creatures of
the earth, dra-
gons, and all in
the deep.

What'er a blooming world contains,
That wings the air, that skims the plains,
United praise bestow;
Ye dragons sound his awful name
To Heaven aloud; and roar acclaim
Ye swelling deeps below.

Let fire, hail,
snow, ice, storms
of wind execute
his will.

Let every element rejoice;
Ye thunders, burst with awful voice
To him who bids you roll;
His praise in softer notes declare
Each whispering breeze of yielding air
And breathe it to the soul.

Let

To

Let the mountains, and all hills,
fruit-bearing trees
and all cedars.

To him, ye graceful cedars bow;
Ye tow'ring mountains, bending low,
Your great Creator own;
Tell, when affrighted nature shook,
How Sinai kindled at his look,
And trembled at his frown.

Let all beasts
and cattle, all
that creep.

Ye flocks that haunt the humble vale,
Ye insects fluttering on the gale,
In mutual concurrence rise;
Crop the gay rose's vermeil bloom.
And waft its spoils, a sweet perfume,
In incense to the skies.

Or fly with
wings.

Wake, all ye mounting tribes, and sing;
Ye plummy warblers of the spring,
Harmonious anthems raise;
To him who shap'd your finer mould,
Who tipp'd your glittering wings with gold,
And tun'd your voice to praise.

Let hymns be
sung to him by
all his Saints, by
the children of
Israel, by the
people; both Hea-
ven and earth pro-
claim his praise.

Let man, by nobler passions sway'd,
The feeling heart, the judging head
In heavenly praise employ:
Spread his tremendous name around,
'Till Heaven's broad arch rings back the sound,
The gen'ral burst of joy.

Let the Kings
of the earth, and
all the people,
the Princes and
Judges of the
earth.

Ye, whom the charms of grandeur please,
Nurs'd on the downy lap of ease,
Fall prostrate at his throne;
Ye Princes, rulers, all adore;
Praise him ye Kings, who makes your pow'r
An image of his own.

Let the young
men and the vir-
gins, all the old
men and the chil-
dren praise the
name of our Lord.

Ye fair by nature form'd to move,
O praise th' eternal source of love,
With youth's enlivening fire;
Let age take up the tuneful lay,
Sigh his blest name--then soar away
And ask an Angel's lyre.

The merit of the above paraphrase, will be, 'tis
hop'd, an apology for presenting it to the reader; it
exhibits

exhibits a laudable specimen of the use which a poetic genius may make of even a devout and religious argument; not that poetry is to be confined to themes of piety, but a christian muse will never wantonly take flight into prophaneness and irreligion. Good talents are degraded when exerted on such bad subjects, as the author of the conquest of Mexico, &c. &c. has chosen.

Note XVIII. p, 34. [S]

THE Title of the 4th Psalm is according to the Septuagint "to the end," signifying in the the interpretation of Jansenius and others, that the psalm was to be sung not barely on the Sabbath eve, or on certain days only; but on every day and for ever *ἕως τοῦ τέλους* to the end of time. St. *Austin* and Genebrarde are of opinion that "to the end" means, that the subject of this psalm is to be referr'd to later times. In the Hebrew, instead of "to the end is put "to the conqueror," which Menochius expounds of the master of the choir or head cantor; *il maestro di Capella*; adding that the Hebrew title is nothing more than a direction that the psalm was to be sung by the best or first singer.

Note XIX. p, 41. [T]

"THE praise of a canticle" signifies the same thing precisely as "the psalm of a canticle," what idea or meaning is to be affix'd to this latter, may be learn'd from St. *Hilary* and St. *Chrysostom* in their prologues to the body of psalms, and other expositors. First then they observed that by a psalm is to be understood the sound of an organ alone; or playing without singing: by a canticle, they say is meant, singing without playing, or the singer's voice unaccompanied by the organ. This distinction leads to the difference there is between the two titles which occur in some parts of the psalter, viz. The canticle of a psalm." and, "The psalm of a canticle," the first, denotes that the organ precedes the choir or voices: The second,

(as

(as is the case, in regard of this present psalm) intimates, that the voices precede the organ.

Note XX p. 46. [U]

THE pious Bishop of Marseilles, attributed the cessation of the dreadful scourge, with which it pleased God to visit that town and diocese, to the practise of a devotion, which several canonized Saints, and other holy Personages, had enforced by precept and example; a devotion, I mean, to the sacred heart of Jesus Christ. During the plague, on the festival of All Saints, collecting the sorrowful survivors of his clergy, (about twenty in number) and the sad remains of his people, he proposed to them their joining all in a fervent address to the throne of mercy, and their making an unanimous effort to draw down upon themselves, the divine pity and assistance, by means of a particular exercise of piety, which had frequently been distinguished by the manifest approbation of heaven, in the joyful relief and deliverance of the afflicted people who practised it. He then, uncovering his head and feet, and taking a crucifix in his hand, began a solemn mournful procession, followed by all who could walk, or even crawl after him, reciting as they went the psalm miserere. Having reached to a temporary altar, erected on an open course or plain for the purpose, the zealous prelate, from the foot of it, in a lengthened, yet animated harangue, exhorting his languishing audience, to rouse all their vigour, and with uplifted minds and voices, to offer and consecrate themselves to the sacred heart of Jesus Christ, their merciful Saviour. He then read aloud, the people accompanying him, a prayer adapted to the occasion, and usually called the act of consecration: after which followed the act of reparation, another sentimental and devout prayer, in use among the pious associates to this devotion. The bishop then proceeded to celebrate mass, and administer the communion: this finished, he took leave of them

them with a confidential assurance, that they would be now protected, and sheltered, as it were, in the sacred heart of Jesus, from the calamity, that had surrounded them. The event verified his words: the mortality instantly abated, and gradually disappeared: so as to leave no doubt in the breasts of a numerous multitude, of an extraordinary interposition of providence in their behalf. A success so notorious and decisive, determined the bishops and magistrates of other towns and dioceses, where also the pestilence raged, to imitate so holy and hopeful an example. The spiritual and temporal powers of Aix, of Arles, of Avignon and Toulon, severally concurred to establish and promote within their respective districts, a piety which they had so just reason to think, would prove no less acceptable to God, than advantageous to themselves. There are authentic records now to be seen at the above places, distinguishing the time and manner in which the prelates and governors, with the whole body of people at large, consecrated themselves to the sacred heart of Jesus, with a solemnity and ardour resembling that above mention, and which crowned with a like happy issue. Devotion bearing such evident marks of divine complacency, and apparently as honourable to God, as beneficial to man, spread with rapidity among all ranks and descriptions of people throughout the kingdom, wherein it is still preserved and cultivated universally; so that all France may have been said to conspire, in various associations, (with her amiable queen at their head, to render to the Son of God, the pleasing homage of a well-directed devotion to his sacred heart. Proportionable has been the zeal and emulation of every other Catholic State in Europe, to say nothing of the East or West-Indies, and even the Grand Mogul's dominions, in all which places, various confraternities have been erected, similar to those established in France. If the reader be desirous of further information, concerning the origin and institution of this devotion; the method and motives of practising it: they

the prayers used in it; it's discriminating characteristic, or the difference between this and the other pious exercises, whereby the church honours the sacred body of Jesus Christ, his sacred wounds and holy name; the nails, the thorns, the cross, and the other instruments of his passion: if he would know the sublime and affecting sentiments of *St. Bernard*, in a reference to this adorable heart; also of *St. Bonaventure*, *St. Gertrude*, *St. Meethilda*, *St. Frances*, *St. Catherine*, *St. Francis of Sales*; and of *Blosius*, *Landfperg*, *Alvares*, *Colonna*, *Agreda*, *Alacocque*, and other venerable characters, from the eleventh to the present century: should the reader, I say, wish to become more intimately acquainted with these and other particulars, he may find a just detail of them in several French treatises, the substance of which he may peruse briefly translated and published in English. If a due gratitude for the amazing and invaluable blessing of redemption, accompany him in his perusal, I will venture to predict he will carry from it, a devout affection to the sacred heart, which was so principally concerned in that stupendous mystery. If he contemplate aright that sacred heart, he will discover in it, wonderfully engraved, the true portraiture of his Redeemer; he will be able to trace therein, what Jesus suffered! he will see how Jesus loved, him, and all mankind.

Note XXI. p. 49. [X]

THIS 113th, together with the fourteenth preceding psalms, are called gradual canticles, or psalms of degrees, steps and ascensions: the reason of which appellations is differently counted for, by different authors. Some Jew Rabbins, derive the name from the musical key, or gradually ascending notes, in which, say they, these psalms were usually sung. 2 Parall p. xx. 19. In reference to this opinion, these psalms are sometimes stiled "longs of elevation." Some expositors assert, that one of these psalms was sung on every

every step leading to the temple, which they infer from the prophet Ezech. c. 40. were fifteen in number, whence came the title psalms of degrees or ascent. Others say, they were used by the Levites, whilst they ascended from the atrium, or court of the women, to that of the men; (concerning this court or gallery. See Salian. A. M. 3145. No. 41. Others again, deduce the title from a practice of reciting these hymns, from an elevated part of the temple, or a kind of orchestra. St. *Austin*, and St. *Basil*, are of opinion, the Jews praised God from these psalms, on their return from captivity in Babylon; and that from the situation of the country, or rising ground between Babylon and Jerusalem, they were called psalms of ascent. Lastly, some translators have rendered the Hebrew title, "songs of excellencies, because of the excellent matter of them, as eminent persons are called, men of high degree." 1 Paral. xvii. v. 17. Tho' these translators have, perhaps, wandered far from the exact literal meaning, yet their version or description, will meet the idea of whoever considers attentively the excellent moral documents, comprehended in each of the fifteen gradual psalms.

Note XXII. p. 50. [Y]

THE great courts belonging to the temple were three; the first, called the court of the Gentiles, because the Gentiles were allowed to enter so far, and no farther. The second was the court of Israel, because all the Israelites, provided they were purified, had a right of admission. The third court was that of the priests, where the altar of burnt-offerings stood, where the Priests and Levites exercised their ministry. Common Israelites, who were desirous to offer sacrifice, were at liberty to bring their victims, as far as the inner part of the court; but they could not go beyond a certain veil of separation, which divided it into two; and the laity withdrew as soon as they delivered their sacrifices and offerings to the priest; or had made their confession

confession with the ceremony of laying their hands upon the heads of the victim, if it were a sin-offering. The priests were not allowed to approach the altars indiscriminately, but only one at a time, who was chosen by lot weekly for that purpose. Every morning and evening, the officiating priest offered incense of a particular composition upon the golden altar of incense, approaching with the smoking censor, or thurible, filled with fire from the altar of burnt offerings. The singular privilege of entering the sanctuary was granted to the high-priest exclusively. He alone was allowed to accede to the Holy of Holy's, and the use of his prerogative, was much more-over restrained to one day in the year, the great day of expiation. These ceremonies of peculiarity and reserve, were instituted by God himself, and we cannot doubt of their being directed with a view to our instruction, no less, than to the immediate discipline of the people of Israel. The great lesson they teach us, a religious awe, or reverential fear of the Deity on these solemn occasions, when we enter into his temple to pay our homage to his Divine Majesty ; but more especially, when we approach thither to assist at the tremendous sacrifice of the new law. The Jewish temple, Sanctuary and altars, were but weak types of our churches, tabernacles and altars. God himself moreover has taught us in person by precept and example, how we ought to pray. The regular example of Jesus Christ, is capable of creating in us Christians, a more lively sense of God's majesty, than all the various rites and ceremonies of the old law, though of divine sanction, could inspire into the Jewish worshippers* : Jesus

O

when

* Francis Ribera, whose piety and learning are highly commended by St. *Teresa*, wrote a treatise in five books, concerning the temple and its appurtenances. The whole work is a continued proof and illustration of the vast awe and respect, with which God requir'd to be treated by the Jews in his temple, and in their worship of him. The most minute circumstances regarding the temple and every thing appertaining to it, conspire to inculcate veneration for divine Majesty.

when he prayed, prostrated himself on the ground, and humbled himself in the dust before his eternal Father. How does such ineffable humility and respect confound our cold formality, our careless behaviour, our callous indifference, nay, our proud neglect, our insults and provocations, at a time set apart for prayer and adoration.

Note XXIII. p. 57. [Z]

THE number of psalms, is the same in the septuagint and vulgate, as in the Hebrew bible, viz. one hundred and fifty: but the ninth and tenth of the latter, is contracted by the former into one; as are also the 114th, and 115th. On the contrary, the 116th, psalm of the Hebrew, is divided into two, by the septuagint and vulgate, as is also the 147th psalm. The first Protestant bible, published in the year, 1534, numbers the psalms according to the distribution of the Hebrews; as does that of the year 1549, and that of the year 1551, as does likewise the bishop's, or queen Elizabeth's bible, and that which is known by the name of king James's. So that from the 21st. verse of the ninth psalm, they count a psalm more than the septuagint and vulgate, and continue to do so, to the 113th, which they at verse 10, divide into two, and by this means get two psalms a-head; hence psalm 114th, of the septuagint and vulgate, is their 116th, but afterwards, by uniting the 114th, and 115th of the Greeks and Latins, they differ but by one to the 146th psalm, which they join to the 147th, and so continue to reckon with the septuagint and vulgate to the end. The authority and canonicalness of the psalms, as well as their number, has always been acknowledged both by Jews and Christians; except that one apochryphal psalm is added to the 150th, in the Greek version; and that some of the Gnostic, Manichean, Anabaptist, and Heretics have denied, that David was a prophet, or an inspired writer.

Septuagint

Septuagint is the name given to a Greek version of the books of the old Testament, because the translation is supposed to have been made by seventy-two Jews, who however are usually called the seventy interpreters. The vulgate, or vulgar Latin translation of the bible, is the most ancient version of the scriptures into latin, and the only one which the church declares to be authentic. The vulgate of the old Testament, seems to have been first translated from the septuagint, and was long known by the name of the Italic translation *. St. *Jerom* made a new version from the Hebrew, with the exception of the Books, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Macchabees, and Baruch, which version of St. *Jerom*, with part of the Italic version, constitutes the vulgate now in use, and authenticated by the Council of Trent. Self. 4.

Note XXIV. p. 68. [AA]

THeodore Zuinger a physician of Ulrich in Switzerland, is said to have written, on his death-bed, a paraphrase on the 121st, psalm † expressive of his extreme confidence that he should pass instantly from this world, "pure and undefiled, into Heaven. This appears from a translation of the paraphrase given by the learned Mr. Merrick, which, we may reasonably conclude to be as faithful and exact, as it is elegant and harmonious.

What joy while thus I view the day
That warms my thirsting soul away
What transports fill my breast?

O 2

For

* In ipsis interpretationibus Itala cæteris præfertur : nam est verborum tenacior cum perspicuitate sermonis.

St. AUG. Doctr. Chris. l. 2.

† The pious recapito in his, "Industrie per fare una buona Morte," gives a long list of scriptural and other devout sentences, to be us'd by sick persons, on the near approach of death; but expressly dissuades them from adopting (unless inspir'd so to do) the first verse of this 121st psalm.

For, lo, my great Redeemer's power
 Unfolds the everlasting door,
 And leads me to his rest.
 The festal morn my GOD is come
 That calls me to thy hallow'd dome
 Thy presence to adore;
 My feet the summons shall attend
 With willing steps thy courts ascend,
 And tread th'ethereal floor.
 E'en now to my expecting eyes
 The Heav'n-built towers of Salem rise,
 E'en now with glad survey;
 I view her mansions, that contain
 Th' angelic forms, an awful train,
 And shine with cloudless day. &c. &c.

awful!
 The famed criterionist, Dr. Middleton, it is attested, did likewise on his death-bed, manifest the most heroic indifference, and unconcernedness, in preparing to meet the "grim king of terrors." Being asked by his lady, if she might try to sooth his pain, and divert his attention from it, by reading to him: he in reply signified his desire of hearing part of Anson's voyage; and presently after, during the lecture, he launched into eternity. Far be it from me, to wish, by these recitals, to convey a disapprobation of a good Christian's well-grounded reliance, on the infinite mercies of his Redeemer. I hope myself to expire in an humble assurance of them. But must it not be allowed, that, that confidence, alone, deserves commendation and encouragement, which has humility and repentance for its basis. The church of GOD knows no other; many of her illustrious saints have requested in their last moments to be placed on the ground, and to go forth from the world, in the most suppliant posture of penitent criminals, to meet their Saviour and their Judge. The great St. *Austin* declares it unbecoming any person, however innocently he may think he has lived, to die with assuming any other

other character than that of a repenting sinner. The Christian who, living in the communion of that Church which Jesus Christ established, does at the approach of death, with unfeigned sorrow bewail his sins, and with an upright intention endeavour to cancel them in a due use of the Sacrament by divine appointment adapted to that purpose; and does moreover labour to enrich his soul with a still greater increase of grace applied through the channels of those other divine ordinances, the Holy Eucharist and extreme Unction. The christian who thus strives, by a sincere repentance to "fulfil in himself what is wanting to him of the passion of Christ;" such a christian, though "He seems in the eyes of the unwise to die" with a superstitious trust in sacerdotal absolution, yet he quits happily his earthly abode to rest eternally, "in peace." How different from this is the latter end of the presumptuous sinner, who whatever kind of life he has led, dies with the bold claim and rash expectation of immortal joys, merely because a Saviour ("who was set for the fall of many" Luke, ii. 34) died for him. This monstrously ungrateful, false, destructive, and therefore damnable opinion, is maintained and propagated by the discourses and actions of thousands, to the ruin of souls, the subversion of morality, the extinction of faith, hope and charity, and the making void of the whole gospel.

Note XXV. p. 80. [BB]

THE great duty of evening prayer and self examination deserves to be more than barely mentioned, nothing can have a more powerful tendency to promote the interests of virtue; nor a greater efficacy in deracinating vice, than the practice of a nightly discussion of conscience, duly and regularly performed. Whoever shall exercise himself with an earnest and devout attention, in the five points usually recommended on these occasions, viz, thanksgiving, petition, examen, resolution, and precaution, shall not fail shortly

to experience the most beneficial effects of his pious diligence; his failings will become daily less; his passions more subordinate; his affections better directed, and the whole man more harmonised, and more happy. The very Heathens were well apprised of the usefulness of this practise, for the preservation and encrease of moral virtues. The celebrated Pythagoras, or rather one of his disciples, has inculcated this duty in certain lines known by the name of the golden verses of Eythagoras. *Μηδ' ὑπνόν μαλακοῖσι σπ' ὀμμασι,*
 &c.

- " Nightly forbear to close thine eyes to rest,
- " Ere thou hast question'd well thy conscious breast
- " What sacred duty thou hast left undone?
- " What act committed which thou ought'st to shun?
- " And as fair truth, or error, marks the deed,
- " Let sweet applause, or sharp reproach, succeed;
- " So shall thy steps, while this great rule is thine,
- " Undevious tread in virtue's paths divine.

Even the gay Horace tell us, he demanded an account of himself at night, of the actions of the day past,

- Neque enim cum lectulus---me
- Excepit defum mihi; "rectuis hoc est"
- "Hoc faciens vivam melius; Sic dulcis amicis"
- "Occurram; *Hoc quidam* non belle: nunquid
- Ego illi"
- "Imprudens olim faciam simile?" hæc Ego mecum
- Compressis agito labiis.

These are sentiments worthy of the wisest Philosophers. Even Solomon himself, would have no reason to disown them, if we may form our judgements from the reflections which an English poet has put into his mouth, on a similar subject.

What had been said, I ask'd my soul, what done?
 How flow'd our mirth and whence the source
 begun?

5 DE60

Perhaps

Perhaps, alas! the pleasing stream was brought
From this man's error, from another's fault;
From topics which good nature would forget,
And prudence mention with the last regret.

PRIOR'S SOLOM. B. ii.

Note XXVI. p. 39. [CC] ps. 129.

THE ancients appointed watches or guards, to be stationed in different places throughout their camps and their cities, both in time of war and of peace, which were relieved every three hours, to render the men the more alert in their duty. Et quia impossibile videbatur in speculis per totam noctem, vigilantes singulos permanere, ideo in quatuor partes per clepsydram sunt divisæ vigiliæ, ut non amplius quam tribus horis nocturnis necesse sit vigilare. A tubicine omnes vigiliæ committuntur, & finitis horis a cornicine revocantur. Veget. de re Milit. l. 3. c. 8. This explains a passage of Propertius in which he alludes to the division Hergetius speaks of:

Et jam quarta canit venturam buccina lucem.

Ipsa in Ocnanum Sydera lapsa cadunt.

Justinian points out the use of these watches in time of peace. Si incendium in urbe fuerit oportet ipsos adesse et operam ponere, & prohibere, nefures bonamiserorum rapiant Just. Nov. 13th, see also Val. Max. l. 8. c. 1. In the summer-time the night watches were usually reduced to three. The division of the day into four parts, the ancients distinguished by the names of first, second, third, sixth and ninth hours, allowing three hours to each part. Hence probably were introduced into the Breviary the titles of Prime, Terce, Sext and None.

Note XXVII. p. 112. [DD]

A More concise and efficacious method of attaining to the perfections of all virtue, cannot perhaps be recommended, than is couched under that plain truth which the Psalmist with such a beautiful variety

variety of expression here inculcates; to wit, That GOD is every where, and knows and sees all things. An habitual constant sense of the divine presence would banish sin from the world, for who would dare to sin if he considered duly that the eye of an avenging GOD beheld him? the same consideration would animate all the children of men, to keep faithfully the commandments of GOD, and to practise diligently all virtue and holiness: by all, it would encourage them to become zealous through distant imitators of glorified saints and angels, who are all necessarily holy, because they walk always in the presence of GOD, and see him face to face. That this would be the most happy consequence of such consideration feelingly and steadily embraced. GOD himself acquaints us, speaking to Abraham "walk before me and be perfect." Gen. xvii. 1. (that is, you will, or must be perfect: the text is a convertible proposition.) Where it may not be improper to observe, that this "walking before GOD," or habitual reflections on the Divine Presence, was in the beginning of the world the substance and sum, as it were, of all religion. "Enoch walked with GOD, and was seen no more, for GOD took him," Gen. v. 24. "Noah was a just and perfect man,--he did walk with GOD." Gen. vi. 9. A constant sense of GOD's presence, seems in those days, to have been more easily attainable than it now is. The creation of the world, while it was fresh and new, must have affected men with sensible and powerful notions of the Deity, as every thing then, was a witness to them of that recent miracle, that transcendent proof of the presence of an omnipotent Being. For the space of nine hundred years and upwards, Adam was a living demonstration of the same Omnipotence; during this length of time, the whole world saw that very man whom GOD had formed out of the dust of the earth: they heard him often recount the history of his creation: they all owned him for their common parent: they knew that he himself had no father, or mother, but came immediately

mediately out of the hands of God. Such sensible images and traces of divine Presence, must have made a great impression on them: but long tradition of the story from father to son, by degrees weakened the impression, as the world grew older and more depraved; and while the great machine moved regularly on, thoughtless men forgot the hand, which first set it in motion. Hence God was pleased to make fresh revelations of himself, by the promulgation of the old law; when the miracles of Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Wilderness, with the prodigies of Mount Sinai, served to renew the knowledge of God in the minds of the people, with fresh vigour and efficacy: and the legal ceremonies were so contrived, as might most conduce to maintain it. For the principal design of instituting, under the Jewish dispensation so many rites, which concerned not only their outward behaviour in the temple, or at the solemn times of religious worship, but extended to their diet, their dress, their dwelling, and the ordinary functions of life, was to remind them continually, upon all occasions of God who instituted them; and to admonish them incessantly to behave themselves as in his presence, while the peculiar method of all their actions, was regulated by his direction. And when these rites failed of his end and design, and the Jews observed them by rote, or for form's sake only; without any regard to the divine author who appointed them, they became gradually unacceptable, and even odious to God, and were at length abrogated. Then Jesus Christ, our emmanuel (or God with us) was born among us: of him it was revealed, that he should actually dwell in all his servants: that he should be really and truly incorporated with them, and that they should be partakers of his divine nature, &c. all which revelation is an astonishing proof of God's presence with us, and lays such obligations upon us to walk in it, as cannot be neglected, without manifestly neglecting, and even endangering our salvation. It is a question therefore well deserving

ing the most serious consideration; how is this habitual, practical sense of the Divine presence to be attained? and here I cannot but reflect how happy it would be for me, to be able to resolve the enquiry from my own experience; but if that be a forlorn wish, let me entreat the reader, to consult the works of those, who have written on this subject, such as the pious M. H. Boudon, Alphonsus Rodriguez, &c. who will give him information on this essential point. Perhaps a good will, and a sincere desire of improvement in this heavenly art, would be his best instructor. It is known, "The delight of GOD is to be with the sons of men." Nothing therefore, but our own perversity and malice, hinders an uninterrupted enjoyment of the Divine presence. Let us begin by banishing sin from our hearts, and resolving to keep the commandments: these simple rudiments, steadily pursued, will lead us to the perfection of this science of salvation, this knowledge of the saints, the knowledge of walking always before GOD. "If any one, says Jesus Christ, keepeth my commandments, my Father will love him; we will come to him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 21.

"There is not in the world, a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with GOD. They only can comprehend it, who practice and experience it: yet, I do not advise you to do it from that motive; it is not pleasure we ought to seek in this exercise; but let us do it from a principle of love, and because GOD would have us so to do. Were I a preacher, I should above all things preach the practice of the presence of GOD: and were I a director, I should advise all the world to it: so necessary do I think it, and so easy too. Ah! knew we but the want, we have of the grace and assistance of GOD; we should never lose sight of him; no, not for a moment. Believe me, make immediately a holy and firm resolution: never more wilfully to forget him, and to spend the rest of your days in his sacred presence; deprived

prived for the love of him (if he should think fit, which he will not) of all consolations. Set heartily about this work, and if you do it as you ought, be assured, that you will soon find the effects of it."

LETT. ANONYM.

Note XXVIII. p. 120. [EE]

THE belief of the immaculate conception of the Virgin-Mother of GOD, is strictly consonant to reason, and agreeable to all the Ideas we may worthily entertain of the goodness, wisdom and sanctity of her divine Son. Ought it to be supposed that Jesus Christ, who is purity and holiness itself, would choose to be so nearly allied to sin and defilement, as to mix and incorporate with it? descending upon earth to become incarnate, and by his passion and death effect the redemption of mankind, would he judge the blood of a sinner, a fit instrument to be employed in the sacred ransom? can it be imagined that he bestowed such unpareled blessings on his enemy, his crucifier; would refuse the most easy favour to his inconceivably beloved parent? no certainly! let no one then hesitate to conclude that as Christ wanted not power, nor motives, so neither did he want affection, nor will to exempt his Virgin-Mother from the foul blot of original sin, "potuit, decuit, ergo Fecit. Scolus. The church of GOD, in that relative honour which she has always paid to all the bright inhabitants of the court of Heaven, has ever distinguished in an eminent manner their glorious Queen. What this most excellent and most humble of human beings says of herself, "all generations shall call me blessed," is an inspired, prophetic declaration of that veneration and devotion which the church in every age has paid, and will continue to pay to her until the end of the world. In taking a review of the grounds of this devotion, (first glancing at the foundation of the objections to it,) I will not insult my readers understanding by reminding him seriously that this blessed Virgin was made by GOD; and

and that consequently she is inferior to GOD; and that the supreme honour due only to GOD, is therefore not to be given to her. That Roman Catholics are taught to worship the Virgin Mary and adore her, even as they adore and worship the great Creator, is the calumny with which vulgar minds detail their vulgar hatred of the church. If other adversaries there be, who more refined in malice as well as understandings, attempt to prove that this state objection is no slander; they only shew themselves to be the instruments of that envy and rancour, which he, (whose head she was born to crush. Gen. iii. 15) has ever shewn against that Heaven-beloved Woman. That she should crush or "bruise his head," is a revealed truth too clear and pointed for that wily spirit, ever to forget or soon to pardon. The Virgin assumed on high, and seated close by the Throne of GOD, is indeed infinitely beyond the reach of all the shafts of malice, he can hurl against her; but by slandering and persecuting her much loved clients, and votaries on earth, he vainly aims "to disturb, at least her heaven." This however "is not victory nor yet revenge." For all her true clients grounding their devotion, on the same rock on which the church stands, have persisted immovable, and will persist to all eternity, in paying her that honour and veneration which her Dignity and merit claim. They readily allow that she is GOD's creature; but yet the most excellent that ever was created; and that she is infinitely inferior to GOD, but yet, the mother of GOD. This her excellence, this her maternity, they know, sufficiently warrants all the praises, and all the prayers which they address to her; or to speak more justly and properly, which they beg of her to address to GOD. They gratefully acknowledge and declare Jesus Christ to be their only Redeemer; but they are convinced that the Virgin by virtue of her election to be his mother, is, next to Christ, the principal instrument of man's redemption. That by virtue of the same election, she is the immaculate

culate spouse of GOD the Father: that she is rightly
 styled by the church, Queen of Heaven, and that her
 merit is proportioned to her rank; that she was sanc-
 tified in her conception: that she was preserved
 through life from all spot or stain of actual sin; that
 she improved in virtue each moment of her life; and
 that her humility exceeded all her other virtues;
 finally, that she was placed at the time of her glorious
 assumption into heaven, before the throne of GOD,
 high above all the heavenly host; where she pre-
 sents their petitions, and joins thereto her own pray-
 ers to render them acceptable to GOD. Now, is not
 all this, they ask, encouragement enough, to pay a
 particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and to re-
 pose a perfect trust and confidence in her intercession?
 Has she not all the conditions requisite to qualify her
 for the office of an interceder? Does she want either
 the will to ask, or the power to obtain for us of Al-
 mighty GOD, whatever helps we stand in need of?
 her zeal for the good of souls, and her charity for her
 neighbour, ever ardent and enflamed, are now en-
 creased to a degree of perfection beyond conception:
 Will she therefore in heaven neglect those whom, upon
 earth, she would have cherished? Are we not her
 children! by grace the adoptive sons of GOD, and
 brothers of Jesus Christ? Will she not compassionate
 us, though sinners, for whom he shed his sacred blood?
 Can she behold in us, and not love, the image of her
 Son. Her good will, therefore, to plead our cause at
 the Throne of Mercy, is manifest: her interest and
 power to do it in an efficacious manner, is still more
 evident. Her charity singly dispells all doubts of her
 readiness to intercede for us; but the whole train of
 her virtues united concur to evince her sway in Hea-
 ven, and the efficacy of her intercession. If we be
 exhorted in scripture to pray for one another Jam. v.
 16. "For this reason, "because the assiduous prayer of
 the just avails very much," and this even, upon earth
 while we are yet subject to many failings; how much

more will avail us the prayers of a person who never offended God; of a person in Heaven; of such a person as Mary mother of God? what are all those stupendous graces and privileges which God bestowed upon her in this life but so many sure pledges that he will refuse her nothing now she is reigning with him in glory? suppose her this day triumphantly entering into Heaven; behold her just now advancing towards the throne of the most high; see the Saints the Angels, the Powers, the Cherubims, wandering and bending low as she passes by: mark the reception given her by the eternal father; by her divine Son, and by the holy spirit: hearken to the seraphic strains. What joy, what jubilee? never, (but once before) was a more solemn triumph celebrated by the court of Heaven. Is not this the seasonable day for intercession? is not this the happy hour, the critical moment wherein to ask favours? can we imagine the Almighty would deny her any thing she demands on this festal occasion? but is there any charge in Heaven? "are not a thousand years in Heaven, as yesterday just past." The happy hour, the crisis, the moment of her intercession, her interest and power still continue; still subsist. And happy thrice happy we, if we make good use of it! if by a sincere devotion and assiduous application to the Blessed Virgin, we should render her our patroness, and advocate to her Son; there is nothing we may not hope for from his mercy. We cannot put our eternal interest into better hands, than by engaging her to favour our cause, who has the greatest power with him, from whom alone we must expect its irrevocable issue.

I flee then to thy patronage, O sacred mother of God, despise not my prayer in my necessity; I have no hopes of salvation, but from the pure goodness of God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ; and by the multitude, and grievousness of my sins, I have deserved to be rejected by him. Pray for me, O blessed Virgin-Mother, intercede for me, that I may find mercy

mercy with thy divine Son. So shall my life be spent in thanksgiving to him, and in gratitude to thee ! not one day shall pass, no, not willingly one hour, without praising thee with the angel, " Hail Mary full of grace," without addressing thee with the church, holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." Amen.

Note XXIX. p. 123. [FF]

THE propriety of fixing the 16th verse of the 50th psalm to the divine office, will further appear from a consideration of the hour at which that office commenced among the primitive Christians; to wit, at the first hour of the civil day, or, immediately after midnight: so that the meaning or purport of the sentence will be obviously this; my first words in the morning, shall be directed to you, O Lord; my lips shall be first opened to your praise, in preference to every other subject. We find that early prayer is recommended in divers parts of scripture: " we ought to prevent the sun to bless thee, O Lord." Prov. 16. " in the morning I will stand before thee, &c. ps. 43." Nor did people rise thus early, only to say their prayers, but to attend to their respective affairs and occupations. Thus the householder mentioned, *St. Matt.* c. xx. " went out early in the morning to hire labourers." And the valiant woman, *Prov.* c. xxxi. rose in the night to feed her domestics. The schoolmasters of ancient Rome, gave lessons to their scholars at midnight. *Juv. Sat.* 7.† Hence it should seem, that the antients made better use of their time, than the moderns; at least they appear to have been more particularly minute in their account and division of it. Their days began, as above said, from midnight. The time immediately succeeding, or the first part of their day, they called, " the decline of midnight:" *mediæ noctis inclinatio*. The next part they distinguished by the crowing of cocks. " *Gallicinium*:" the next by the silence of the cocks, and

† See *Vir. Geor.* iii.

and the whole creation; "Conticinium." Then came the dawn or day-break: "Diluculum." To this succeeded the morning: "Mane," lasting 'till noon. "Meridies." Their next terms of division, were day-fall; "tempus occiduum," or day-set, "suprema tempestas." Now drew on the evening, or candle-light, "primafax." The part following this, was discriminated by night-watch: "noctu-concubiæ:" and the intervening time between midnight, was deemed unseasonable night: "nox intempesta," or time unfit for business. Vide Macro. Satur. l. 1. c. 3.

L. D. S.

5 DE 60
F I N I S.

